

# THE DAYS OF MY LIFE

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY

SIR H. RIDER HAGGARD

AUTHOR OF 'KING SOLOMON'S MINES,' 'SHE,' 'RURAL ENGLAND,' ETC.

EDITED BY

C. J. LONGMAN

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

IN TWO VOLUMES

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# THE DAYS OF MY LIFE

## CHAPTER XIII

### 'ERIC BRIGHTEYES' AND 'NADA THE LILY'

'Eric Brighteyes'—Dedicated to the Empress Frederick—Correspondence with her—Lang's letters about Eric—Letters from R. L. S.—Poem by him—'Beatrice'—Marie Corelli—Lady Florence Dixie—Cordy Jeaffreson again—Criticism of 'Beatrice'—'Nada the Lily'—'Epic of a dying people'—Last letters from Sir Theophilus Shepstone—Dedication of 'Nada' to him—*Vale*, Sompseu, *Vale*—Savile Club—Sir Ian Hamilton—Ilis experiences at Majuba—Rudyard Kipling—Sir Henry Thompson—Michael Fairless at Bungay—Sir E. W. Budge—His anecdotes.

I BEGAN to write 'Eric Brighteyes,' the saga which was the result of my visit to Iceland, on August 29, 1888, as the manuscript shows, and I finished it on Christmas Day, 1888. It was dedicated to the late Empress Frederick, under the circumstances which are shown in the following correspondence.

My brother William wrote to me from the British Embassy at Athens, where I think he was First Secretary at the time, on October 30, 1889:

It may interest you to hear that the Empress Frederick told me the other night that the last pleasure that her husband had on earth was reading your books, which he continued to do through his last days, and that he used to express the hope that he might live to make your acquaintance. I replied that I knew the pleasure that it would give you to know you had soothed the dying moments of such a man, whereupon she

begged me to write and tell you. She was very much affected in speaking of this and of her husband, and I had subsequently a very interesting conversation with her about him and the rest of her family. . . . You will be glad to hear that the Prince of Wales and his family read 'Cleopatra' on their way out here, and think it your best book.

On December 3, 1889, I wrote to the Empress as follows :

MADAM,—My brother has written to me from Athens, saying that your Majesty is disposed to honour me by accepting the dedication of my romance, 'Eric Brighteyes.'

In a letter to him—which I believe your Majesty has seen—I have set out the reasons which caused me to make this offer. Therefore I will not trouble your Majesty by repeating them any further than to say how deeply honoured I shall be should you finally decide to accept my dedication.

I now enclose for your Majesty's consideration that which I have written to this end. Should I be so fortunate as to win approval for my draft dedication, would it be too much to ask that one of the enclosed copies may be returned to me signed by your Majesty's hand, or that a *written* approval may be conveyed to me in some other way? I ask this in order to protect myself from any possible future charge of having presumed to write what I have written without full permission.

Next comes a letter from the Empress to my brother William.

NAPLES, GRAND HOTEL: December 13, 1889.

The Empress Frederick has received a few days ago a letter from Mr. Haggard's brother on the subject of the dedication of his romance, 'Eric Brighteyes.'

The Empress will have the greatest pleasure in accepting the dedication, and begs Mr. Haggard to tell his brother so, and also to convey her grateful thanks to him in her name, for his letter and for the drafts of his dedication, to which the Empress would suggest a small alteration, which has been inserted in one copy.

It is indeed true that the Emperor Frederick while at San Remo—during those months of anxiety, of alternate hopes and fears, which he bore with a fortitude, patience and gentleness never to be forgotten—found great pleasure in reading Mr. Rider Haggard's books. He as well as the Empress especially admired 'Jess,' of which she read out a great part to him aloud. How pleasant were the hours so spent—and how bitter it is to look back on the last happiness of days never to return—can easily be imagined.

Mr. Rider Haggard says in his letter that he leaves for Greece on the 13th: so the Empress sends this on to Athens. The Empress hopes the slight change she suggests in one passage of the dedication—which she thinks charming—will not annoy the author, and she is anxiously looking forward to reading the book itself, which will now have a special interest for her! The Empress regrets exceedingly that Mr. Haggard's brother was not at Athens during her stay there, and that she thus lost the pleasure of making his acquaintance, but hopes she may be more fortunate another time.

On January 19, 1890, the Empress sent me a registered holograph letter from Berlin, which is now bound up with the manuscript of the book. It runs as follows:

The Empress Frederick thanks Mr. Rider Haggard for his letter of the 27th December, and greatly regrets the long delay in answering.

Mr. R. Haggard no doubt has heard of the sad circumstances which caused so hurried a departure from Rome. Since arriving here many unavoidable duties have completely taken up the Empress's time.

—Mr. R. Haggard will understand this all the better as he and his family have so recently sustained a sad loss of the same kind—for which the Empress takes this opportunity of offering her sincere condolences. The Empress encloses the printed draft of the dedication with a suggestion for a slight alteration; and begs Mr. R. Haggard to accept her best thanks for the copy of 'Jess' and the collection of stories just published,

which she is looking forward to reading when she has a little leisure.

With this letter are two copies of the dedication, annotated in the hand of the Empress, for it seems that it was sent to her twice before it was finally settled as it appears in the book. A few years later, when I was at Homburg for my health, the Empress Frederick asked me to lunch, and I had a long and interesting conversation with her. As I kept no notes, however, I forget its details. She impressed me as a singularly charming and able lady.

'Eric' commended itself very much to Lang. Here is the first thing I can find about it in his letters.

'Eric' begins Ar. I don't know what about the public, but I love a saga but even too well, especially if it be a bloody one delicately narrated, or a very affectionate thing indeed but brutally set down, as Shakespeare says. I have only read Chapter 1, but it's the jockey for me.

P.S.—I have read four chapters, including Golden Falls. I think it is the best thing you have done, but of course I am saga-fain! I didn't think anyone could do it.

Next letter, dated Saturday.

I have got Eric into Swanhill's toils, and I don't think I have come to a dull page yet. I don't want to flatter, but it literally surprises me that anyone should write such a story nowadays. Charles Kingsley would have spoiled it by maundering and philosophising. I have hardly seen a line which is not in keeping yet. Also the plot is a good natural plot and the characters, except Gudruda, sympathetic. I think *she* might be a little less feminine and ill-willy. As literature I really think it is a masterpiece so far as I have gone. I'd almost as soon have expected more Homer as more saga. I don't think much of the boy who can lay it down till it is finished; women of course can't be expected to care for it. Surely it should come out before the 'Bow,' which is such a flukey thing, whereas, whatever reviews and people may say,

'Eric' is full of the best qualities of poetic [? word doubtful] fiction.

Next letter, undated.

The more I consider 'Eric,' the more I think that except 'Cleopatra,' which you can't keep back, I'd publish no novel before 'Eric.' It is so very much the best of the lot in all ways. Probably you don't agree, and the public probably won't stop to consider, but *it is*. I'd like to suggest one or two remarks for a preface—if any. The discovery of the dead mother and the dialogue with the Carline struck me very much. Clearly Swanhild *needed* no witchcraft, and as certainly her natural magic would have been interpreted so—at the time and much later. Perhaps the final bust-up might be less heavy in the supernatural, or more distinctly represented as the vision of fay men—subjective. Oddly enough, I found a Zulu parallel to-day : 'I have made me a mat of men to lie on,' says the Zulu berserk when he had killed twenty and the assegais in his body were 'like reeds in a marsh.' He is in Callaway. . . . It is worth an infinite number of Cleopatras, partly because you are at home in the North. I wouldn't let anyone peddle it about, or show people, but stick to someone like Longman, if it were mine.

And again :

I suppose Ingram must see it,<sup>1</sup> but I wish it could appear to-morrow in a book. Comparisons are odious, and I understand your preferring 'Cleopatra.' People inevitably prefer what gives them most serious labour. But it's a natural gift that really does the trick. I bet a pound George Eliot preferred 'Romola' and 'Daniel Deronda' to 'Scenes of Clerical Life.' I have a hideous conscience which knows that a ballad or a leading article are the best things I have done, though I'd prefer to prefer 'Helen of Troy.' But she's a bandbox.

The last letter that I can find of Lang's which has to do with 'Eric Brighteyes' was evidently written in answer to one from myself in which I must have shown

<sup>1</sup> For the *Illustrated London News*.—ED.

depression at certain criticisms that he made verbally or otherwise upon the book.

Bosh! It is a rattling good story! But I am trying to read it as critically as I can, and I am rather fresh from saga-reading. This makes me see more clearly than other people the immense difficulty in combining a saga with a story of love, which, except in the 'Völsunga,' where the man was one of the foremost geniuses in the world, they never attempted. Other people won't read it like that, and it is not right that it should be read in that way. Done in my way it would be rather pedantry than literature, but I am a born pedant. It is chock full of things nobody else could have done: indeed nobody else could have done any of it. The Saevuna part is excellent: I only doubted whether, for effect, her cursing speech should not be terser. I never read the very end, as it had affected me quite enough before I came to that. The scene on shipboard is not too like the Wanderer bit [in 'The World's Desire.'—H. R. H.], because it is worked out and credible. The cloak, however, would suffice and be all right, without the replacing of the bonds, which, under the cloak, would be needless. The other bit, the seduction, is all right in itself: but it is one of the passages which the sagas would have slurred, as not interesting to their bloodthirsty public. I think it may be none the worse for what you have done to it. Don't 'tine heart' about it because of my pedantries. It is because it is *good* that I want it to be best. Skallagrim is always worth his weight in wadmal, whatever wadmal may be. The death of Groa fetches me less, I don't know why. However, if you once don't think well of it, in the nature of man it is certain to be more excellent, just as one always did well in examinations where one despaired. It is a queer fact, but it is so. The style is capital, but I rather think that of 'Nada' is still better. I hope I shall ~~live to~~ review it, or rather that I shall review it if I live. For heaven's sake, don't be disgusted with it, or me because I look at it through a microscope. If I didn't my looking at it would be of little use. None of my things are worth the lens, and the trouble, so I don't.

Yours ever,

A. LANG.

'Eric' came out in due course, and did well enough. Indeed as a book it found, and still continues to find, a considerable body of readers. My recollection is, however, that it was reviewed simply as a rather spirited and sanguinary tale. Lang was quite right. The gentlemen who dispense praise and blame to us poor authors have not, for the most part, made a study of the sagas or investigated the lands where these were enacted. I wonder if it has ever occurred to the average reader how much the writer of a book which he looks at for an hour or two and throws aside must sometimes need to know, and what long months or years of preparation that knowledge has cost him? Probably not. My extended experience of the average reader is to the effect that he thinks the author produces these little things in his leisure moments, say when he, the reader, would be smoking his cigarettes, and this without the slightest effort.

To return to 'The World's Desire.' This work also came out in due course, and was violently attacked: so I gather from Lang's letters, for I have none of the reviews. All that I remember about them is the effort of its assailants to discriminate between that part of the work which was written by Lang and that part which was written by myself—an effort, I may add, that invariably failed. However, all these things have long gone by, and the book remains and—is read, by some with enthusiasm.

Here is another note from Lang from Scotland, headed Ravensheugh, Selkirk, Friday.

Stevenson says he is 'thrilled and chilled' by Meriamun. He thinks much of it 'too steep,' bars Od(yssseus) killing so many enemies—exactly what Longinus says of Homer—and fears Meriamun is likely to play down Helen. He is kind

enough to say 'the style is all right,' and adds a poem on Odysseus. I'll send you the letter presently.

I suppose that Lang did send this letter, and that I returned it to him. I believe that subsequently he lost both the letter and the poem. Luckily, however, I took the trouble to keep a copy of the latter, and here it is.

## I.

Awdawcious Qdyshes,  
 Your conduc' is vicious,  
 Your tale is suspicious  
     An' queer.  
 Ye ancient sea-roamer,  
 Ye dour auld beach-comber,  
 Frae Haggard to Homer  
     Ye veer.

Sic veerin' and steerin' !  
 What port are ye neerin'  
 As frae Egypt to Erin  
     Ye gang ?  
 Ye ancient auld blackguard,  
 Just sec whaur ye're staggered  
 From Homer to Haggard  
     And Lang !

## 3.

In stunt and in strife  
 To gang seeking a wife—  
 At your time o' life  
     It was wrang.  
 An' see ! Fresh afflictions  
 Into Haggard's descriptions  
 An' the plagues o' the Egyptians  
     Ye sprang !

4.

The folk ye're now in wi'  
Are ill to begin wi'  
Or to risk a hale skin wi'  
In breeks—  
They're blacker and hetter—  
(Just ask your begetter)  
And far frae bein' better  
Than Greeks.

5.

Ther's your *Meriamun* :  
She'll mebbe can gammon  
That auld-furrand salmon  
Yoursel' ;  
An' *Moses* and *Aaron*  
Will gie ye your fairin'  
Wi' fire an' het airn  
In Hell.

I refuse to continue longer. I had an excellent half-verse there, but couldn't get the necessary pendant, and anyway there's no end to such truck.

Yours,

R. L. S.

Now I will turn to my modern novel, 'Beatrice.' Oddly enough, Lang liked it, although he says somewhere that he 'infinitely prefers' Umslopogaas and Skallagrim.

I have read your chapters of 'Beatrice.' *Sursum corda* : it moves, it has go and plenty of it. . . . I fear it is a deal more popular line than 'The World's Desire.'

May 8th.

I have read 'Beatrice,' and if she interests the public as much as she does me, she'll do. But I have marked it a good deal, and would be glad to go through it with you, looking over the scribbled suggestions. It is too late, but what

a good character some male Elizabeth would have been: nosing for dirt, scandal, spite and lies. He might easily have been worked in, I think. . . . They [*i.e.* the hero and heroine] are a good deal more in love than Odysseus, Laertes' son, and Mrs. Menelaus! It is odd: usually you 'reflect' too much, and yet in this tale, I think, a few extra reflections might have been in place. I feel a Thackerayan desire to moralise.

Here is another allusion.

A letter I wrote anent B. was never posted. I said I did not quite think Geoffrey gave the sense of power, etc.; and that his rudeness to B. was overdone and cubbish, which you notice yourself. I think, in volume shape, that might yet be amended.

Miss Marie Corelli writes on June 12, 1890 :

If you are still in town, and you would favour me with a call on Sunday afternoon next, about five o'clock, I should be so pleased to renew the acquaintance made some months past, when your kindly words made me feel more happy and encouraged me in my uphill clamber ! I saw you from the gallery at the Literary Fund Dinner, and wished I had had the chance of speaking to you. Your book 'Beatrice' is *beautiful*—full of poetry and deep thought—but I don't believe the public—that with obstinate pertinacity look to you for a continuation *ad infinitum* of 'King Solomon's Mines' and 'She'—will appreciate it as they ought and as it deserves. Whenever I see a *World* and *Pall Mall Gazette* vulgarly sneering at a work of literature, I conclude that it *must* be good—exceptionally so!—and this is generally a correct estimate: it certainly was so concerning 'Beatrice.'

Trusting you will come and see me (we are very quiet people and don't give crushes !),

Believe me,

Very sincerely you... ,

MARIE CORELLI.

Here is a letter from the late Lady Florence Dixie, whom I first met years before in South Africa, which is interesting as showing that in the year 1890 she held

views that since then have become very common. In short, she was a proto-suffragette.

You will, I hope, excuse this letter, and not misunderstand me in what I say. I have just finished reading your 'Beatrice,' and have put it down with a feeling that it is only another book in the many which proclaims the rooted idea in men's minds that women are born to suffer and work for men, to hide all their natural gifts that man may rule alone.

Does it not strike you that Beatrice—if she had been given equal chances with Geoffrey—would have made a name as great, aye, greater than his? 'Yet because she is a woman you will give her no such chance. You leave her to her useless, aimless, curtailed and wretched life which ends in suicide. Think you not that Beatrice in Geoffrey's shoes might have made a great name for good? Forgive me—but as you *can* write, why not use your pen to upraise woman, to bid her become a useful member of society—the true companion and co-mate of man, and they working together shall help to make impossible such miserable victims of a false and unnatural bringing up as Elizabeth and Lady Honoria? You hold such women up to scorn. Yet are they the fruit of unnatural laws which men have wrongfully imposed on womankind. Greatly and in many ways does woman err in all paths of life—but is she entirely to blame? You men ~~have~~ made her your plaything and slave: she is regarded more in the light of a brood mare than anything else; and if within her narrow sphere she errs, who is to blame? Not her, believe me, but the false laws that made her what she is.'

I have just published a new book, 'Gloriana; or, The Revolution of 1900.'

Will you give me the pleasure of accepting a copy if I send you ~~one~~? If you read it, you will not misunderstand this letter I hope.

Believe me,

Sincerely yours,

FLORENCE DIXIE.

P.S.—I hope you will excuse me for sending you some papers which will show you that there are some women, and

men too, who feel that the cruel position of woman is unbearable.

Alas ! 1900 has come and gone years ago, and the Revolution is still to seek. But perhaps it is at hand. . At any rate Lady Florence strove manfully for her cause in those early days, if in the circumstances 'manfully' is the right word to use.

I find a letter dealing with 'Beatrice' from Cordy Jeaffreson, from which I quote an extract :

. . . It is a fine, stirring, effective story ; but with all its power and dexterity it is not *the book* which will determine your eventual place in the annals of literature. You will write *that book* some ten years hence, when I shall be resting under the violets ; and when you are enjoying the fullness of your triumph, you will perhaps give me a kindly thought and say, 'The old man was right.' In a line, it is no small thing to have thrown off 'Beatrice,' but you will do something much greater when 'you've come to forty year.' The story strengthens my confidence in you, though it falls short of all I hoped for you. This is *not* damning with faint praise.

Ever yours,

J. C. J.

Alas ! that wondrous work of fiction which Cordy Jeaffreson anticipated never was and never will be written by me. Be it good or be it bad, the best that I can do in the lines of romance and novel-writing is to be found among 'the first dozen or so of the books that I wrote, say between 'King Solomon's Mines' and 'Montezuma's Daughter.' Also I would add this. A man's mind does not always remain the same. People are apt to say of any individual writer that he has gone off, whereas the truth may be merely that he has changed, and that his abilities are showing themselves in another form. Now, as it happens in my own case, in the year 1891 I received a great shock ; also subse-

quently for a long period my health was bad. Although from necessity I went on with the writing of stories, and do so still, it has not been with the same zest. Active rather than imaginative life has appealed to me more, and resulted in the production of such works as '*Rural England*', '*A Farmer's Year*', and others. Moreover, I have never really cared for *novel*-writing : *romance* has always made a greater appeal to me.

Here is a letter from Lang, to whom I had evidently shown that from Mr. Jeaffreson which is quoted above.

I don't much agree with Jeaffreson. The book is a compromise, by its nature, and rather contains good things than is very good, to my taste, but it is only taste, not reason. Lord knows what you may write, or anybody read, in ten years. More than sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. The character of Geoffrey goes against my grain, but what he should have been, to satisfy me, I don't know.

I imagine you missed your tip, by not being born nine hundred years ago. I might have been a monk of Ely, and you might have flayed me and composed a saga at first hand. It would have been a good saga, but I could not stand being flayed, I know. I am worried and sad and seedy, and far from a successful correspondent. . . . Jeaff. is very kind, however, though not a prophet nor a critic, I think. The former quality is much better.

Some years after '*Beatrice*' was published I was horrified to receive two anonymous or semi-anonymous letters from ladies who alleged that their husbands, or the husbands of someone connected with them—one of them a middle-aged clergyman—after reading '*Beatrice*', had made advances to young ladies of that name; or perhaps the young ladies had made advances to them which they more or less reciprocated—I forget the exact facts. Also I heard that a gentleman and a lady had practised the sleep-walking scene, with

different results from those recorded in the book. These stories troubled me so much—since I had never dreamed of such an issue to a tale with a different moral—that I wished to suppress the book, and wrote to Charles Longman suggesting that this should be done ; also I took counsel with Lang and other friends. They thought me extremely foolish, and were rather indignant about the business. Longman's views are expressed in such of his letters as I can find dealing with the matter, only he added that, even if there had been any reason for it, it was not possible to suppress a book so widely known, especially after it had been pirated in America. Lang's letters I have not time to find at present, but I remember that they were to the same effect. Here are those from Longman, or as much of them as is pertinent.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW :  
November 28, 1894.

MY DEAR RIDER,—I will get hold of the *Saturday Review* and *Spectator* reviews of 'Beatrice.' I have not heard anything from Liverpool yet about that person, but I will let you hear as soon as I can. I will not write fully yet on the subject, but I may say that the idea that the character of Beatrice could lead anyone into vice is preposterous. Still less is the example of Bingham likely to throw an unnatural glamour over seduction : in the first place, he was man enough to resist temptation ; in the next place, both he and Beatrice were most unmercifully punished. Do not let this matter worry you. I assure you there is nothing you need regret.

Longman also wrote :

*Christmas Day, 1894.*

I like the Preface to 'Beatrice' much better as amended. Lang is quite right : your feelings in the matter did infinite credit to your heart, but you disturbed yourself unnecessarily. I am glad we inquired into that Liverpool story and pricked

the bubble. I will send you a revise of the Preface. I return Lang's letter.

I have now found this letter of Lang's to which Longman refers. It is dated from St. Andrews on December 20th, and begins :

You Confounded Ass. The thing is Rot. Don't take it *au sérieux*. At least that is how it strikes *me*. If you must say something, say what I leave in. The novel seems to me perfectly devoid of moral harm. There are still hopes here that the Samoan story is a lie [this refers to the death of Stevenson]. It has caused me sincere grief, but, at fifty, one seems rather case-hardened. However, don't *you* go and leave the world before me. R. L. S. had as much pluck, and as kind a heart, as any man that ever lived, and extraordinary charm.

The 'Liverpool story' to which Longman refers was, I believe, one of those detailed in the anonymous letters. Evidently he caused it to be inquired into and found that it was baseless.

The end of the matter was that I went through the tale carefully, modified or removed certain passages that might be taken to suggest that holy matrimony is not always perfect in its working, etc., and wrote a short preface which may now be read in all the copies printed since that date.

As I have said, the incident disturbed me a good deal, and more or less set me against the writing of novels of modern life. It is very well to talk about art with a large A, but I have always felt that the author of books which go anywhere and everywhere has some responsibilities. Therefore I have tried to avoid topics that might inflame even minds which are very ready to be set on fire.

The charge has been brought against me that my pages have breathed war. I admit it, and on this point

am quite unrepentant. Personally I may say that I have a perfect horror of war, and hope that I may not live to see another in which my country is involved, for it seems to me terrible that human beings should destroy each other, often enough from motives that do not bear examination. Yet there is such a thing as righteous war, and if my land were invaded I should think poorly of anyone, myself included, who did not fight like a wild-cat. I am not even sure that I would not poison the wells if I were unable to get rid of the enemy in any other way. What is the difference between killing a man with a drug and killing him with a bomb or by hunger and thirst? Patriotism is the first duty, and the thing is to be rid of him somehow and save your country. However, this is a question on which I will not enter.

For the rest war brings forth many noble actions, and there can be no harm in teaching the young that their hands were given to them to defend their flag and their heads. If once a nation forgets to learn that lesson it will very soon be called upon to writ *Finis* beneath its history. I fear that we, or some of us, are in that way now—or so I judge from the horror expressed upon every side at the doctrine that men should not grudge a year or so of their lives to be spent in learning the art of war. If God gave us our homes, I presume that He meant us to protect them!

I think that the next book I wrote after 'Eric,' or at any rate the next that was printed, was 'Nada the Lily,' which I began upon June 27, 1889, and finished on January 15, 1890. It is pure Zulu story, and, as I believe I have said, I consider it my best or one of my best books. At any rate, the following letter from my friend Rudyard Kipling seems to show that this story has one claim on the gratitude of the world.

VERMONT, U.S.A.:

October 20, 1895.

DEAR HAGGARD,—Watt has just forwarded me a letter addressed to *you* from a bee-keeping man who wanted to quote something of a jungle tale of mine. I dare say it didn't amuse you, but it made me chuckle a little and reminded me, incidentally, that the man was nearer the mark than he knew: for it was a chance sentence of yours in 'Nada the Lily' that started me off on a track that ended in my writing a lot of wolf stories. You remember in your tale where the wolves leaped up at the feet of a dead man sitting on a rock? Somewhere on that page I got the notion. It's curious how things come back again, isn't it? I meant to tell you when we met; but I don't remember that I ever did.

Yours always sincerely,

RUDYARD KIPLING.

Here are some extracts from Lang's letters on the subject of 'Nada.'

April 20th.

I read right through to Chaka's death. It is admirable, the epic of a dying people, but it wants relief. Massacre palls The old boy (*i.e.* the narrator of the story, Mopo) would have given no relief, naturally, but an idyll or two seem needed. The style is as good as it can be, an invention. I think a word or two more in the preface might be useful. I have made a slight suggestion or so. I like 'Eric' better, but this is perhaps more singular. How any white man can have such a natural gift of savagery, I don't know. The Wolves are astonishing.

Yours ever,

A. L.

The next letter is undated, but was probably written within a day or two of that just quoted.

I've finished 'Nada.' If all the reviewers in the world denied it, you can do the best sagas that have been done yet: except 'Njála' perhaps. Poor Nada! I hope it will be done into Zulu. The old wolf Death-grip was a nice wolf.

*May 13th.*

Many thanks for the book. You know exactly what I think of 'B.' ['Beatrice'], but I like your *natural* novels better a long way than your modern ones at the best, which this probably is. Beatrice is all right when anything flares up, and all right when in the open air, but the Lady Honorias of this world are not in your beat nor mine. . . . But, oh, how much I prefer Galazi and Skallagrim to these moderns !

*ST. ANDREWS : January 18th.*

I'll return 'Nada' to-morrow. The Wolves are the best thing of yours I know. Indeed the unity of tone and savagery throughout are unique. But there will be rows about the endless massacres. I have no doubt a Zulu epic would be like this, but reviewers are not Zulus, worse luck. I think that it is excellent, and quite alone in literature as a picture of a strange life. But one knows the public. It is far more veracious than 'Eric,' and far less modern : also far less rhetorical. Chaka is a masterpiece. But I am a voice *clamantis in cremo* : people won't understand. The *realien* are awfully well done, no appearance of cram about them.

Lang was quite right about the reviewers. They for the most part, not having mixed with savages, and never having heard of Chaka and only dimly of the Zulus—for by this time our war with that people was forgotten—saw little in the book except unnecessary bloodshed. But there it is : a picture, as Lang says, 'of a dying people.' I hope that hundreds of years hence the highly educated descendants of the Zulu race may read it and learn therefrom something of the spirit of their own savage ancestors.

I cannot find many letters about 'Nada.' Here, however, is one from Charles Longman, dated May 14, 1890.

'Nada' strikes me with wonder and awe. It is in some ways the greatestfeat you have performed : I mean because you have constructed a story in which the *dramatis personae* are all

savages and yet you have kept the interest going throughout. There will of course be a terrible outcry about gore. I never read such a book. It is frightful, and the only justification for it is the fact that it is history, not imagination. Wherever it is possible I would tone down the effect rather than heighten it, so as to avoid the charge of wallowing or gloating as far as possible. The wolves and the wolf brethren are delightful; I wish you could have given us more of them. I was very glad to meet our old friend Umslopogaas as a boy.

These two letters are from Sir Theophilus Shepstone to whom the work was dedicated. The first is headed Durban, Natal, August 18, 1891.

MY DEAR HAGGARD,—I was very, *very* glad to see your handwriting again in a note addressed to me. For I know not how long past, I have never thought of you without a pang of conscience: and I need not say that I have often and often thought of you, and felt proud of you, and rejoiced at your success.

The truth is that for a time I had always the intention in my mind of writing to you, but I thought that a short note would not be worth sending, so the doing of it was postponed from one time to another until at last the difficulty became insuperable apparently, for I could scarcely hope that after so long a silence and seeming indifference any letter from me could be welcome. Your kind note and still kinder proposal, however, clear all that uncomfortable feeling away, and I am pleased accordingly to find that after all you bear no ill-will. Of course I shall take it as a great compliment and a gracious and christian way of turning the other cheek to be smitten if you carry out your proposal to dedicate your new Zulu novel to me. If I had known that you were engaged upon such a work I might have helped you with materials. . . . But when I saw that you were oscillating between the North and South Poles, calling at Cairo and dallying a bit at the Equator in your erratic course, I concluded that your interest in these parts had ceased. . . .

I have been for some time past very unwell, and two months ago they sent me down here for change of air. I am not to

go back till the end of this month or the beginning of next. Meanwhile the change is doing me great good, and I feel better and stronger than I have felt for several years. I had begun to lose a great deal of interest in passing events, and felt unable to enjoy much of life, but all this has now changed for the better, I am glad to say. . . . If ever you have a moment to spare I should be glad, so glad, to hear how the friends are who were so kind to me at your good old father's house. I am glad you had an opportunity of talking to old Osborn. He is expected to arrive here in a day or two, and I shall have the chance of hearing from him all about you. I am very proud of my Transvaal colleagues ; every one of them has distinguished himself in one way or another. Captain James and Fynney, poor fellows, have, as the Zulus say, 'gone beyond.' I always feel indebted to you all for your loyal support and zealous fellow-working in the Transvaal. This mail brought me with your letter one from the editor of *Greater Britain*, calling my attention to an article in the July number of that periodical entitled 'Many Lands, One People' and asking my views upon it. I shall write him a very short answer, for I am sorry to say I am as yet unable to see anything practical in the proposals of Imperial Federation. I am afraid you will think me old-fashioned and heterodox, but I cannot as yet see anything stronger than the bond which ties the members of a family together. Love to you both from yours always sincerely,

T. SHEPSTONE.

In due course the dedication was finished and sent. Charles Longman always thought it one of the best things I had ever written, and, when I told him the other day that I was engaged upon this task, he especially asked me to insert it here. Therefore I do so.

#### DEDICATION

SOMPSEU :

For I will call you by the name that for fifty years has been honoured by every tribe between the Zambesi and Cape Agulhas,—I greet you !

Sempseu, my father, I have written a book that tells of

men and matters of which you know the most of any who still look upon the light ; therefore, I set your name within that book and, such as it is, I offer it to you.

If you knew not Chaka, you and he have seen the same suns shine, you knew his brother Panda and his captains, and perhaps even that very Mopo who tells this tale, his servant, who slew him with the Princes. You have seen the circle of the witch-doctors and the unconquerable Zulu impis rushing to war ; you have crowned their kings and shared their counsels, and with your son's blood you have expiated a statesman's error and a general's fault.

Sompseu, a song has been sung in my ears of how first you mastered this people of the Zulu. Is it not true, my father, that for long hours you sat silent and alone, while three thousand warriors shouted for your life ? And when they grew weary, did you not stand and say, pointing towards the ocean : ' Kill me if you wish, men of Cetywayo, but I tell you that for every drop of my blood a hundred avengers shall rise from yonder sea ! '

Then, so it was told me, the regiments turned staring towards the Black Water, as though the day of Ulundi had already come and they saw the white slayers creeping across the plains.

Thus, Sompseu, your name became great among the people of the Zulu, as already it was great among many another tribe, and their nobles did you homage, and they gave you the Bayété, the royal salute, declaring by the mouth of their Council that in you dwelt the spirit of Chaka.

Many years have gone by since then, and now you are old, my father. It is many years even since I was a boy, and followed you when you went up among the Boers and took their country for the Queen.

Why did you do this, my father ? I will answer, who know the truth. You did it because, had it not been done, the Zulus would have stamped out the Boers. Were not Cetywayo's impis gathered against the land, and was it not because it became the Queen's land that at your word he sent them murmuring to their kraals ? To save bloodshed you annexed the country beyond the Vaal. Perhaps it had been better to leave it, since ' Death chooses for himself,' and after all there

## THE DAYS OF MY LIFE

was killing—of our own people, and with the killing, shame. But in those days we did not guess what we should live to see, and of Majuba we thought only as a little hill !

Enemies have borne false witness against you on this matter, Sompseu, you who never erred except through over-kindness. Yet what does that avail? When you have 'gone beyond' it will be forgotten, since the sting of ingratitude passes and lies must wither like the winter veldt. Only your name will not be forgotten ; as it was heard in life so it shall be heard in story, and I pray that, however humbly, mine may pass down with it. Chance has taken me by another path, and I must leave the ways of action that I love and bury myself in books, but the old days and friends are in my mind, nor while I have memory shall I forget them and you.

Therefore, though it be for the last time, from far across the seas I speak to you, and lifting my hand I give you your 'Sibonga'<sup>1</sup> and that royal salute, to which, now that its kings are gone and the 'People of Heaven' are no more a nation, with Her Majesty you are alone entitled :

Bayéte ! Baba, Nkosi ya makosi !  
 Ngonyama ! Indhlovu ai pendulwa !  
 \* Wen' o wa vela wasi phata !  
 Wen' o was hlul' izizwe zonke za patwa nguive !  
 Wa geina nge la Mabun' o wa ba hlul' u yedwa !  
 Umsizi we ziitandane e zihlupckayo !  
 Si ya kuleka Baba !  
 Bayéte, T'Sompseu !<sup>2</sup>

and farewell !

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

To Sir THEOPHILUS SHEPSTONE, K.C.M.G., Natal.

*13th September 1891.*

<sup>1</sup> Titles of praise.

<sup>2</sup> Bayéte, Father, Chief of Chiefs !  
 Lion ! Elephant that is not turned !  
 You who nursed us from of old !  
 You who overshadowed all peoples and took charge of them,  
 And ended by mastering the Boers with your single strength !  
 Help of the fatherless when in trouble !  
 Salutation to you, Father !  
 Bayéte, O Sompseu !

Here is the touching letter in which Sir Theophilus acknowledges it. It is bound up with the manuscript of 'Nada,' and is the last that I ever received from him, for he died during the following year.

DURBAN, NATAL : *July 13, 1892.*

MY DEAR HAGGARD,—Your gift reached me when I was very seedy and unable to do much in the writing way. I have come down here for change from the cold of Maritzburg, and am much better.

I need not say how gratifying to me that gift was ; nor how deeply touching to me the kind words of the Dedication were. Indeed you give far more credit than I am entitled to. Your kindly expressions, however, vividly brought to mind a whole chapter of the pleasant past between us, the exact counterpart of which will, I suppose, never occur to any other two. I feel extremely grateful to you for your affectionate remembrances, and for your plucky avowal of them, for I do not think that at present it is fashionable to look either upon myself or my work with much approval.

I cannot, however, help thinking that if some of my views and advice had been acted on we should have avoided both the national disaster and disgrace that took place after the 'pleasant past' that you and I spent together in the Transvaal.

The Boers did not really want to fight, and we are always pusillanimous enough before we make up our minds to begin, so we did not want to fight either ; but it appears that the Home Government did want to undo the annexation. Nothing could have been done more easily, or have looked more gracious to those concerned. Why not have plainly told me their wish and authorised me to carry it out ? We should have parted with embraces and the best of mutual good feeling ; as it is we have earned the contempt as well as the hatred of the Boers, and very much puzzled the native races, who from considering us their staunchest and most powerful protectors have come to look upon us as the most unreliable of friends. And very good cause they have for their change of view : look at the last twelve or fourteen years' history of Zululand. But I did not

want to go into polemics. As the Zulus would say, it is only my way of thinking.

I hope the good little wife and all the children are well ; my love to her, please. I was much interested the other day by an account of you all that appeared in the *Strand Magazine*, which someone sent me from England. The pictures were, I thought, very good indeed, and reminded me strongly of my visit to Ditchingham, when I had the pleasure of spending a few days with you.

Please remember me kindly to all the members of your family. They were all so extremely kind to me.

Yours affectionately,

T. SHEPSTONE.

These were his last words to me—words which, I think, will be read with interest in the future, seeing that they sum up his views of his Transvaal policy as he held them just before his death. But I will not attempt to reopen that matter, upon which I have already said my say.

*Vale, Sompseu, vale !*

I used to know a good many interesting people during those years when I lived in London.

Lord Goschen, then Mr. Goschen, dined with me at a dinner I gave at the Savile Club, and we always remained friendly till his death. He was a most able and agreeable man ; also there was something rather attractive about the low, husky voice in which he addressed one, his head held slightly forward as though he wished to be very confidential. Besides a number of literary men, Mr. Balfour was my guest at that dinner, and I think Lord Lytton also. I remember that it was a most pleasant feast, at which seventeen or eighteen people were present, and one that, to my great relief, went off without a hitch.

It was Lang who introduced me to Mr. Balfour. Of this circumstance I was reminded the other day when I met Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the Mediterranean stations, on the Orient liner *Otway* when I was returning from Egypt (April 1912). He asked me if I remembered a little dinner that Lang gave at the Oxford and Cambridge Club somewhere about 1886 or 1887, at which Balfour, he, and I were the only guests. Then it all came back to me. Lang asked me to meet Mr. Balfour because he knew that already I wished to escape from novel-writing and re-enter the public service, a matter in which he thought Mr. Balfour might be of assistance. Ian Hamilton, his cousin, he asked because he had escaped from Majuba, and I also knew a great deal about Majuba.

By the way, General Hamilton, whom I had not met from that day to this, gave me, while we were on the ship together, a long and full account of his experiences and sufferings in that dreadful rout ; but as these tally very closely with what I have written in this book and elsewhere, I will not repeat them in all their painful detail. He was shot through the wrist and struck on the head with splinters of stone. The Boers dismissed him, telling him that he would 'probably die.' He passed a night in the cold, and, had it not been for a kindly Boer who found him and bound up his wrist—I think he said with a piece of tin for a splint—he would probably have perished. That Boer, Sir Ian Hamilton—who, by the way, is now the only officer in the British Army who was present at Majuba—met at Bloemfontein the other day. Naturally they were the best of friends, and Sir Ian has sent him a souvenir of the event. Finally, as he lay unable to move, he was found by a British

search-party and taken back to camp, where in due course he recovered.

I see that in '*Cetewayo and his White Neighbours*' I stated that Majuba was attacked by two or three hundred Boers, adding that I did not believe the story which the Boers told me, that they rushed the mountain with not more than a hundred men—a version which subsequently I adopted in '*Jess*.' Sir Ian told me, however, that the smaller figure was quite correct. He even put it somewhat lower. A dreadful story, in truth!

Talking of the Boer War reminds me of Sir Redvers Buller. I knew him and his wife, Lady Audrey, very well. We used to dine at their house, where we met a number of distinguished people, among whom I remember Lord Coleridge, the Chief Justice. He was a brilliant conversationalist with a marvellous memory. I have heard him tell story after story without stopping, till at length I began to hope that the stock was running low. Sir Redvers was always very kind to me, but he was not a man to cross in argument. Once, at his own table, I heard him differ from the late Lord Justice Bowen in a way that made me glad that I was not Lord Justice Bowen. What struck me was the extraordinary patience with which the Judge submitted to the scolding. He must have had a very sweet nature; indeed I always thought that this was so.

It was about this time that I first made the acquaintance of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who had recently arrived in England, I suppose from India. He was then a young fellow about five-and-twenty, and in appearance and manner very much what he is to-day. I cannot recall under what circumstances we first met. Perhaps it was at a dinner-party which I gave at my house, 24 Redcliffe Square, to some literary friends. I remem-

ber that Kipling arrived late and explained the reason by pointing to a cut upon his temple. Whilst he was driving towards my house his hansom collided with a van in Piccadilly, and there was a smash in which he had a narrow escape. From that time forward we have always liked each other, perhaps because on many, though not on all, matters we find no point of difference.

Another man very well known in his day with whom I was acquainted was the great and accomplished doctor, Sir Henry Thompson, by birth an East Anglian like myself. Once I was present at one of his famous octave dinners. If I remember right, we were received in a room hung round with beautiful pictures by Etty, as were others in the house. It had a couch in it on which Sir Henry slept, or rather tried to sleep, at nights. He suffered terribly from insomnia, and told me that one of his plans to induce slumber was to count thousands of imaginary sheep running through a phantom gate. Also he would rise and walk about the streets to cause weariness.

A very interesting gentleman whom I knew was the late Mr. Meredith Townsend. He was one of the editors and part owner of the *Spectator*, out of which journal he told me he drew a comfortable £5000 a year. His conversation was particularly delightful and informing, especially when he spoke of India.

I have before me a letter that he wrote to me before I visited Iceland, in which he says :

It would be worth living to read your account of a Berserk, a white Umslopogaas, with a vein of pity in him for women only. . . . You are aware that the Berserks when they left their Aryan home on the northern slope of the Hindoo Koosh took with them hemp and the dangerous knowledge of its quality of producing a temporary fury of battle. The secret

still remains in India, and natives who mean killing swallow *bhang*.

I think that this hint gave me the idea of my Norse character, Skallagrim. Mr. Townsend told me that he would live to be eighty, which he did. I, he said, should die at sixty, as by then my highly strung temperament would have worn me out. '*Quien sabe?*' as the Mexicans say.

Another person whom I knew very well was Miss Marjorie Barber, who has since become famous on the strength of her delicately written and arresting booklet, 'The Roadmender,' which was published after her death.

My intimacy with Marjorie was brought about by the fact that her sister Agnes—a woman with as fine a literary sense and more all-round ability, although circumstances and a family have allowed her but little time to make use of them—became my sister-in-law as I have said,<sup>1</sup> and, before that event, for some years lived in our house. While she was here, or shortly afterwards, Mrs. Barber, her mother, and Marjorie came to live at Bungay, a mile away, so that I saw plenty of the latter. She was a tall and pretty girl, very pleasant, very witty—I think one of the most amusing afternoons I ever had in my life I spent with her alone in the British Museum; it was our last meeting, I believe—and with all the eccentricity that so usually accompanies a touch of genius.

At the time of her residence in Bungay she was under the sway of a Low Church mania, and used to appear dressed as a deaconess and with a large Bible pressed against her middle. Nor was she above laughing at herself when the ludicrous aspect of her get-up

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 216.—ED.

was pointed out to her. Subsequently, with a swing of the mental pendulum she became equally High Church, and modelled crucifixes and saints extremely well. I think it was between these periods that she was with difficulty restrained from starting off alone to become a missionary in China. I remember well that when her sister Mabel, now also dead, was informed of one of these phases she wrote back : 'Oh ! for goodness' sake leave Marjorie alone, for if it wasn't that, it would be "Captain Happy Eliza" with a tambourine ! '

In her later days, after her mother's death at Bungay, Marjorie met a lady doctor who, I think, treated her for some illness. To this lady and her husband she became so much attached that not only did she go to live with them, but also formally adopted their family name and, when she died, left them everything she possessed. I believe that these adopted parents were very kind to her, and nursed her well during her last painful and complicated illness, which I was told was tuberculous in its origin.

It was only during her last years that Marjorie took to writing, which, seeing how great were her abilities in this direction, is unfortunate. It is, however, quite possible, judging from what I know of her disposition, that if she had begun earlier she would have wearied of the business and cast it aside. As it was, she showed great perseverance under distressing circumstances, for, when she became unable to use her right hand, she taught herself to write with the left and in all sorts of strange attitudes made necessary by her complaint. Personally I prefer 'Brother Hilarius' to all her few other literary efforts, not excluding the much-praised 'Roadmender,' perhaps because of its charming pictures of the scenery of this neighbourhood.

Marjorie had considerable psychic powers. Thus

her sister Agnes told me only the other day that she had actually known her, when lying helpless in bed, to read a newly opened letter held in a person's hand at the other end of a long room far beyond her reach of vision, without, of course, any acquaintance with the contents of the letter. Her sister told me also—she was present at the time—she believed that she really died some days before the breath actually left her. In this connection she exemplified the conduct of a little dog in the house—I think it was a fox-terrier—which was much attached to Marjorie and for long weeks at a time could scarcely be got away from her bedside. A few days before her actual breathing ceased, however, this dog suddenly left the room, and could not by any means be prevailed upon to return there. Such at least is the story as it came to me.

I am very sorry not to have seen more of Marjorie during her last years, but in truth she vanished away from kith and kin and friends.

Another of my early friends, who, I am glad to say, still survives, is Dr. Wallis Budge,<sup>1</sup> the head of the Egyptian Department of the British Museum, to whom not long ago I dedicated my book 'Morning Star,' an attention that pleased him very much. I really think that Budge is both the most industrious and the most learned man of my acquaintance. How he can compass all the work he gets through—and such work!—is to me one of the marvels of the age. As might be expected, he is a great believer in the Old Egyptians; indeed, as I told him not long ago, he has been so long of their company in spirit that almost he has become one of them. Budge seems to be of opinion that the ancient thinkers among this people discovered all that we can learn of the mysteries which relate to the life

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir E. W. Budge.

of the soul, the resurrection, etc. In times that passed away before history began—when, as he says, men had leisure for reflection—they found out much that we think now. Afterwards, he remarked to me, the medicine-man and the paid priest arose and overlaid the truth with all the fantasies and formulas and ridiculous details of symbolical worship which it was to their advantage to imagine and maintain. If I understand him right, he holds that religion pure and undefiled wells up spontaneously in the heart of man, and that afterwards it is smothered, and even killed, with the dross of ritual and controversy where professional theologians pitch their camps.

There has been much talk of late of a painted board on which a face is carved, which once rested on the mummy of a priestess of Amen who lived about 1500 B.C. It has been supposed to bring misfortune to those who had anything to do with it, or who even looked upon it.

One day in the autumn of 1889 a gentleman was shown into Dr. Budge's room in the British Museum and, producing a photograph of the painted board, asked him to tell him what the object represented was. Budge saw at once that it was an object of which the Museum had few examples, and that it was in a good state of preservation, and also an antica of considerable value. The visitor said, 'Do you want it?' Budge said, 'Yes, but we have no money.' Visitor: 'I don't want money. I'll give it to you.' Budge: 'Very handsome of you. Please give me your name and address, and I will report your generous gift to the Trustees.' The visitor did so, but lingered, and after a time said, 'Could you send for it to-day?' There was difficulty, it then being three o'clock, in getting a van and men, but they were got and sent for the board. The

visitor asked if he might remain till the board came, and Budge gave him books to look at. In due course the board arrived and the men brought it upstairs, and the visitor got up and thanked Budge profusely. Said Budge, 'The thanks are due to you from us.' Whereupon the visitor took Budge by the hand and said words to this effect : ' Thank God you have taken the damned thing ! There is an evil spirit in it which appears in its eyes. It was brought home by a friend of mine who was travelling with Douglas Murray, and he lost all his money when a bank in China broke, and his daughter died. I took the board into my house. The eyes frightened my daughter into a sickness. I moved it to another room, and it threw down a china cabinet and smashed a lot of Sèvres china in it. The cook saw it and fainted, and the other servants saw flashes of fire come from the eyes, and ran away from the house. A friend suggested the giving it to the Museum, and, thank God ! you have accepted it. I want no thanks. I shall be ever in your debt.' With these words he left the room and Budge saw him no more. The board was put into the mummy room, and Douglas Murray and W. T. Stead came and examined it and said it possessed psychic powers—that a soul in torment was chained up in the board, and so on. All this got into the papers, and much nonsense besides. Budge said that the board had given them no trouble, and published it in one of his books.

A certain mummy had many weird stories attached to it. It was bought by 'Midge' Ingram of the *Illustrated London News* and brought to London. Budge was sent to report upon it by his chief, Dr. Birch, and he said it belonged to the Ptolemaic Period and came from Akhmim, in Upper Egypt. Ingram bought it in Luxor, and was said to have carried it off without



FROM "W. A. Y." — MAY 21, 1887



paying what the native wanted for it. The native ran after the boat along the bank for miles, and cursed Ingram with all his might in the name of Allah. Among the inscriptions on the coffin were extracts from a funerary work, and the copy of it in the British Museum had a curse attached. The curse declared that the man who stole the work, or burnt it, or buried it, or drowned it, should be blotted out, his body and seed destroyed for ever, etc. During a shooting tour in Somaliland Ingram shot at a huge she-elephant with buck-shot and enraged the beast. He fired again, and the elephant pursued him among the palms, and finally caught him with her trunk and lifted him into the air and dashed him limb from limb. Then she found the trunk and trod it with her feet to a pulp. Sir Henry Meux, who was of the party, collected the remains, put them in a box and buried them, but a few days later the box was washed out of its bed, and the party decided to carry it to the sea-coast. Before Ingram left England he gave the mummy—which he had agreed to sell to the British Museum—to Lady Meux of Theobalds Park, who placed it in her Egyptian collection. There it lay for several years, and Lady Meux used to go into the museum every day and pray by the side of the case containing it. Budge published a full description of the mummy and coffin, and a splendid collotype reproduction of the coffin, in the 'Catalogue' of the Meux Collection which he made for Lady Meux. The collection was bequeathed to the British Museum by Lady Meux, but her conditions were such that the proposed gift could not be accepted. The collection was then sold by auction and dispersed.

I asked Budge if he believed in the efficacy of curses. He hesitated to answer. At length he said that in the East men believed that curses took effect, and that he

had always avoided driving a native to curse him. A curse launched into the air was bound to have an effect if coupled with the name of God, either on the person cursed or on the curser. Budge mentioned the case of Palmer, who cursed an Arab of Sinai, and the natives turned the curse on him by throwing him and his companions down a precipice, and they were dashed to pieces. Budge added, ‘I have cursed the fathers and female ancestors of many a man, but I have always feared to curse a man himself.’

Two other stories of Budge’s are worth preserving.

When he was at Cambridge Dr. Peile of Christ’s offered him an exhibition if he would be examined in Assyrian, and as Budge’s funds were exiguous he was very anxious to get the exhibition. An examiner, Professor Sayce of Oxford, was found to set the papers —four in all—and the days for the examination were fixed. The night before the day of the examination Budge dreamed a dream in which he saw himself seated in a room that he had never seen before—a room rather like a shed with a skylight in it. The tutor came in with a long envelope in his hand, and took from it a batch of green papers, and gave one of these to Budge for him to work at that morning. The tutor locked him in and left him. When he looked at the paper he saw it contained questions and extracts from bilingual Assyrian and Akkadian texts for translation. The questions he could answer, but he could not translate the texts, though he knew them by sight, and his emotions were so great that he woke up in a fright. At length he fell asleep, but the dream repeated itself twice, and he woke up in a greater fright than before. He then got up—it was about 2 A.M.—went downstairs to his room, lighted a fire, and, finding the texts in the second volume of Rawlinson’s great

work, found the four texts and worked at them till breakfast-time, when he was able to make passable renderings of them. He went to College at nine, and was informed that there was no room in the Hall, it being filled by a classical examination, and that he must go into a side room near the kitchens. His tutor led him to the room, which was the duplicate, skylight and all, of the one he had seen in his dream. The tutor took from his breast pocket a long envelope, and from it drew out several sheets of green paper similar to that of the dream, and gave Budge the examination paper for that morning, saying that it was green because Sayce, on account of delicate eyesight, was obliged to use green paper when writing cuneiform. The tutor then turned, said he would come back at twelve, and, going out, locked the door behind him as Budge saw him do in the dream. When he sat down at the table and looked at the paper he saw written on it the questions and four pieces of text for translation, and the texts were line for line those which he had seen in his dream. Surprise at his good fortune prevented him from writing steadily, but at length he got to work and had finished the paper before the tutor appeared and unlocked the door at noon. The three other papers were easier, and Budge got the exhibition—for him a very vital matter.

I asked Budge if he could explain the matter, or account for it in any way, and he said, 'No. My mother and maternal grandmother both had dreams of this sort from time to time when they were in any kind of difficulty, and in their dreams they were either shown what to do or were in some way helped. Being very pious folk, they regarded these dreams as the work of Divine Providence, who wished for some reason to help them out of trouble or difficulty. For myself, I could never

imagine Providence troubling about any examination, but I was quite overcome for a time with astonishment at my good luck.'

There is one story. Let the reader make of it what he can, for it is beyond my powers of interpretation.

In the second story Budge was only indirectly concerned. He was at Cairo waiting for a boat to England, and he was wandering down Kamil Street when two ladies, mother and daughter, stopped him and greeted him with warmth and affection. They had been telegraphing to several places in the Sudan to find him, and were glad to meet him. Budge had known both mother and daughter for several years, and asked them if they wanted to go to the Egyptian Museum. The daughter said 'Yes.' The mother said 'No,' and then went on to tell him that she wanted to have her fortune told by a really good Egyptian fortuneteller. There was such a man in Cairo at the time, and Budge had talked astral 'lore and zodiacal influences and such stuff with him, and went and found him and introduced him to the lady. A retired quarter of a balcony was found, and the three of them, Budge and the two women, sat on chairs, while the native—a Parsî, by the way—squatted on the ground. Budge told him that his gratuity would depend on the excellence of the fortune he brought to the lady. He took out of his bosom a small brass astrolabe—which Budge has to this day—and a turquoise tablet with figures of the planets, etc., on it, when Budge said, 'Put those away and read the lady's fortune from her face.' He put them away, and sat and looked steadily into the lady's face. Presently he said, 'Madame is — years, — months, and — days old,' and his statement was correct. Next he said, 'Madame has been ill since her husband died.' Budge did not know

of the death, but the man was correct. After a pause he said, 'Madame drinks too much strong water.' Budge was furious, but the lady said, 'It is true : I tried to drown my sorrow.' Another pause, and then, 'Madame is thinking of making a contract about a house. I see the house in a very large garden. Let not madame take that house, for if she does she will lose money, will become ill in it, very ill.' Budge asked the lady if this was true, and she said, 'Yes ; I have the lawyer's letter in my pocket,' and produced it. At this point Budge insisted on withdrawing out of earshot of the conversation between the fortune-teller and the lady, and sat where he could watch the proceedings. After a full half-hour the lady jumped up from her chair, turned the contents of her money-bag into the man's lap, and then rushed in almost speechless fury to where Budge was and upbraided him and called him a false friend. She said words to this effect : ' You have told that man everything about my life, and you are in league with him. You are both blackguards, and I will never speak to you or see you again. That scoundrel has insulted me, and he dared to tell me to watch my daughter, because she would poison me and kill me. That shows what you are ! ' The lady rushed off to her rooms, and Budge never saw her again.

The end of the story as Budge gave it to me is this : The lady took the house, which was large and in a fashionable West End quarter, spent a good deal of money on the lease and in furniture, and then fell seriously ill. The illness increased, the doctors ordered her to the seaside, and the house was sold at a great loss, and much of the furniture. Her illness increased, and one night, when in acute pain, she asked her daughter to give her a dose of medicine containing morphia because she could not rest. The daughter

took up the small bottle which her mother pointed out to her and, seeing no instructions written upon the label, poured the whole of its contents into a glass and gave it to her. The sick lady, dazed with pain, took the glass and drank all that was in it. She never spoke or moved again. Reports of the proceedings which took place appeared in many papers, and the absence of instructions on the label of the bottle was somehow explained.

There is the story, and I leave the reader to ponder over it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have Sir E. W. Budge's permission to say that he has seen and consents to the publication of the above stories.—ED.

## CHAPTER XIV

### MEXICO

J. Gladwyn Jebb—His character—Mr. and Mrs. H. R. H. visit him in Mexico—Death of their only son while absent—New York on way to Mexico—Reporters—Their loyalty to each other—Mexico City—Don Anselmo—Golden Head of Montezuma—Treasure hunt—Zumpango—Journey to silver mine—Chiapas—Vera Cruz—Frontera—Millions of mosquitoes—A mule load of silver—Attempt of robbers to steal it—Silver mine—Tarantulas—Mishap on journey back—Return to England.

DURING the year 1889 I made the acquaintance of my late friend J. Gladwyn Jebb, one of the most delightful persons whom I have ever known. Some irony of fate brought it about that Jebb should devote his life to the pursuit of mining and commercial ventures—a career for which he was utterly unsuited. The result may be imagined: he worked very hard in many evil climates, broke down his health, dissipated his large private means in supporting unremunerative enterprises, and died saddened and impoverished.

I have described his character in my introduction to ‘The Life and Adventures of J. G. Jebb,’ by his widow, from which I quote a short passage.

In the city of Mexico, where business men are—business men, he was respected universally, and by the Indians he was adored. ‘He is a good man, Jebb,’ said an honourable old Jewish trader of that city to me—‘a man among a thousand, whom I would trust anywhere. See, I will prove it to you, *amigo*: he has lived in this town doing business for years,

yet, with all his opportunities, he leaves it *poorer than he came here*. Did you ever hear the like of that, *amigo* ?'

Would that there existed more of such noble failures—the ignoble are sufficiently abundant—for then the world might be cleaner than it is. It matters little now: his day is done, and he has journeyed to that wonderful Hereafter of which during life he had so clear a vision, and that was so often the subject of his delightful and suggestive talk. But his record remains, the record of a brave and generous man who, as I firmly believe, never did, never even contemplated, a mean or doubtful act. To those who knew him and have lost sight of him there remain also a bright and chivalrous example and the memory of a most perfect gentleman.

Unfortunately for myself, a connection in the City had introduced me to certain Mexican enterprises in which he was concerned that in due course absorbed no small sum out of my hard earnings. Also he introduced me to Jebb, which good deed I set against the matter of the unlucky investments.

Jebb urged me to come to Mexico and write a novel about Montezuma, both of which things I did in due course; also as a bait he told me a wonderful and, as I believe, perfectly true tale of hidden treasure which we were to proceed to dig up together. Of this treasure I will write hereafter.

Jebb and Mrs. Jebb returned to Mexico during the year 1890, where my wife and I made arrangements to visit them at the commencement of 1891.

And now I come to a very sad and terrible event that pierced me with a sudden thrust which has left my heart bleeding to this day. Yes, still it bleeds, nor will the issue of its blood be stayed till, as he passes

by, I touch the healing robes of Death. I refer to the death of my only son.

This child—he was just under ten when he died—possessed a nature of singular sweetness, so sweet that its very existence should have and indeed did warn me of what fate held in store for us. So far as my experience goes, children who bring with them to the earth this twilight glow of the bright day in which perchance they dwelt elsewhere, who wear upon their brows this visible halo of an unnatural charm and goodness, rarely remain to bless it long. That which sent them forth soon calls them back again. And yet, could we but understand, their short lives may not lack fruit. Through their influence on others they may still work on the world they left.

My son Rider—he was by his own wish called Jock, to avoid confusion between us—was such a child as this. I can never remember his doing what he should not, save once when he teased his little sisters by refusing to allow them to come out of a place where he had imprisoned them, and for his pains had the only scolding I ever gave him. Yet he was no milksop or ‘mother’s darling.’ He bore pain well, would ride any horse on which he could climb, and even while he was still in frocks I have known him attack with his little fists someone who made pretence to strike me. He was an imaginative child. One example will suffice. We left London on our holiday : it was the year in which I wrote ‘Allan Quatermain.’ When we drove from the station to the farm the full moon shone in the summer sky. ‘Look, dad,’ he said, pointing to it, ‘there is God’s lamp !’

The boy was beloved by everyone who knew him, and in turn loved all about him, but especially his mother and myself. How much I, to whom all my

children are so dear, loved, or rather love, him I cannot tell. He was my darling ; for him I would gladly have laid down my life.

It is strange, but when I went to Mexico I knew, almost without doubt, that in this world he and I would never see each other more. Only I thought *it was I who was doomed to die*. Otherwise it is plain that I should never have started on that journey. With this surety in my heart—it was with me for weeks before we sailed—the parting was bitter indeed. The boy was to stay with friends, the Gosses. I bade him good-bye and tore myself away. I returned after some hours. A chance, I forget what, had prevented the servant, a tall dark woman whose name is lost to me, from starting with him to Delamere Crescent till later than was expected. He was still in my study—about to go. Once more I went through that agony of a separation which I knew to be the last. With a cheerful face I kissed him—I remember how he flung his arms about my neck—in a cheerful voice I blessed him and bade him farewell, promising to write. Then he went through the door and it was finished. I think I wept.

I said nothing of this secret foreknowledge of mine, nor did I attempt to turn from the road that I had chosen because I was aware of what awaited me thereon. Only I made every possible preparation for my death—even to sealing up all important papers in a despatch-box and depositing them in Messrs. Gosling's Bank, where I knew they would be at once available.

But alas ! my spirit saw imperfectly. Or perhaps knowing only that Death stood between us, I jumped to the conclusion that it was on me of an older generation that his hand would fall, on me who was about to undertake a journey which I guessed to be dangerous,

including as it did a visit to the ruins of Palenque, whither at the time few travellers ventured. It never occurred to me that he was waiting for my son.

About six weeks later—for I may as well tell the story out and be done with it—that hand fell. My presentiments had returned to me with terrible strength and persistence. One Sunday morning in the Jebbs' house in Mexico City, as we were preparing to go to church, they were fulfilled. Mrs. Jebb called us to their bedroom. She had a paper in her hand. ‘Something is wrong with one of your children,’ she said brokenly. ‘Which?’ I asked, aware that this meant death, no less, and waited. ‘Jock,’ was the reply, and the dreadful telegram, our first intimation of his illness, was read. It said that he had ‘passed away peacefully’ some few hours before. There were no details or explanations.

Then in truth I descended into hell. Of the sufferings of the poor mother I will not speak. They belong to her alone.

I can see the room now. Jebb weeping by the unmade bed, the used basins—all, all. And in the midst of it myself—with a broken heart! Were I a living man when these words are read—why, it would be wrong that I should rend the veil, I who never speak of this matter, who never even let that dear name pass my lips. But they will not be read till I, too, am gone and have learned whatever there is to know. Perhaps also the tale has its lessons. At any rate it is a page in my history that cannot be omitted, though it be torn from the living heart and, some may think, too sad to dwell on.

This morning, not an hour since, I stood by my son’s grave and read what I had carved upon his cross: ‘I shall go to him.’ Now that I am growing old these

words are full of comfort and meaning to me. Soon, after all these long years of separation, I shall go to him and put my faith to proof. If it be true, as I believe, then surely my spirit will find his spirit, though it must search from world to world. If, with all earth's suffering millions, I am deluded, then let the same everlasting darkness be our bed and canopy.

On my return from Mexico I wrote a romance called '*Montezuma's Daughter*.' In this tale the teller loses his children, and I put into his mouth what myself I felt. Here are the words : I cannot better them after all these years, and they are as true to me now as they were then.

Ah ! we think much of the sorrows of our youth, and should a sweetheart give us the go-by, we fill the world with moans and swear that it holds no comfort for us. But when we bend our heads before the shrouded shape of some lost child, then it is that for the first time we learn how terrible grief can be. Time, they tell us, will bring consolation ; but it is false : for such sorrow time has no salves. I say it who am old—as they are so shall they be. There is no hope but faith, there is no comfort save in the truth that love which might have withered on the earth grows fastest in the tomb, to flower gloriously in heaven ; that no love indeed can be perfect till God sanctifies and completes it with His seal of death.

I wrote just now that, for reasons I hope to set out later in this book, I believed my faith, which amongst other things promises reunion of the death-divided, to be a true faith. Indeed, if it be otherwise, what a hell is this in which we live. Thrusting from the memory all other trials and sorrows, not for any finite earthly life that could be promised me would I endure again from year to year the agony I have suffered on the one count of this bereavement, which is, after all, so common and everyday a thing. If ever,

in some dread hour, faith in all its forms should be proved a dream and mockery, surely in the same hour will sound the death-knell of all that is best in the educated world. Brutes which guess of nothing better can live happy till the butcher finds them : men who believe can endure till God consoles or calls them. But will the much-developed man whose heart-strings, like those of the Aeolian harp, must thrill and sob in every wind of pain—will *he* continue to endure if once he is assured that beneath the precipice from which he will presently be hurled there is—Nothing ? Knowing all they must be called upon to suffer at the best, will he breed children, perhaps to see them thrown from the stark cliff before his eyes and there to cease to be *for ever* ? (The case of France, where I believe faith grows very weak, seems to give answer to this question. Yesterday I read that in that country during 1911 the deaths exceeded the births by over thirty thousand. My conviction is that, unless faith returns to her in some form, as a nation France is doomed. She will fall as Rome fell, and from the same cause.)

In short, I hold that God and a belief in a future life where there is no more pain and tears are wiped from off all faces are necessities to civilised and thoughtful man, and that without them, slowly perhaps, but surely, he will cease to be. He will commit suicide when Fortune frowns, as did the Roman who had outgrown his gods ; he will refuse to propagate his kind, as do the French. Why should he breed them to be the bread of Death ?

Such are the conclusions at which I have arrived after many years of reflection which began at the time of my great grief. They may be right or they may be wrong ; that the future history of the white races will reveal. At least I believe in them. Nor do I believe

alone. But yesterday I was speaking on these matters to a bishop of the English Church, a very able and enlightened man. I found that my views were his views, and my conclusions his conclusions. Also he thought, as I do, that many of our present troubles, industrial and other, arise from the loss of faith among men. The feast of Life, such as it is, is spread before their eyes. They would help themselves to the meagre and bitter fare they see, and who can wonder? ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.’

To return to the sorrow which gave rise to these reflections. I staggered from the room; I wrote a cable directing that the burial should take place by the chancel door of Ditchingham Church, where now he lies. Afterwards I took up a Bible and opened it at hazard. The words that my eyes fell on were: ‘Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.’ The strange chance seemed to cheer me a little. That afternoon I went for a walk in the great avenue. Never shall I forget that walk among the gay and fashionable Mexicans. I did not know till then what a man can endure and live.

Now I have come to understand that this woe has two sides. If he had lived who knows what might have chanced to him? And the holy love which was between us, might it not have faded after the fashion of this world? As things are it remains an unchangeable, perfect, and eternal thing. Further, notwithstanding all, I am glad that he lived with us for those few years. His sufferings were short; his little life was happy while it endured; he went, I believe, quite sinless from the world; and, lastly, I believe that the soul which has been, is and will be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My son died suddenly of a perforating ulcer after an attack of measles. Perhaps surgery could have saved him to-day.—H. R. H.

As for myself, I was crushed ; my nerves broke down entirely, and the rest of the Mexican visit, with its rough journeyings, is to me a kind of nightmare. Not for many years did I shake off the effects of the shock ; indeed I have never done so altogether. It has left me with a heritage of apprehensions, not for myself personally—I am content to take what comes—but for others. My health gave out. I left London, which I could no longer bear, and hid myself away here in the country. The other day I found a letter of this period, sent to me as an enclosure on some matter, in which the writer speaks of me as being ‘ quite unapproachable since the death of his only son.’ So, indeed, I think I was. Moreover, at this time the influenza attacked me again and again, and left me very weak.

We did not come home at once—what was the good of returning to the desolated home ? Our boy had died in a strange house and been brought to Ditchingham for burial. What was the good of returning home ? So there, far away, in due course letters reached us with these dreadful détails and heart-piercing messages of farewell.

And now I have done with this terrible episode and will get me to my tale again. The wound has been seared by time—few, perhaps none, would guess that it existed ; but it will never heal. I think I may say that from then till now no day has passed, and often no hour, when the thought of my lost boy has not been present with me. I can only bow my head and murmur, ‘ God’s will be done ! ’

I remember reading in one of R. L. Stevenson’s published letters, written after he had helped to nurse a sick child, that nothing would induce him to become a father, for fear, I gathered, lest one day he might

be called on to nurse his own sick child. I can well understand the effect of the experience on a highly sensitive nature, and, as a matter of fact, he died childless. Yet, as I read, I wondered what he would have felt had such a lightning shaft as fell upon my head from heaven smitten and shattered *him*.

Perhaps, being frail, he would have died. But I was tougher, and lived on. More: I went among murderers and escaped; I wandered into the fever lands, and never took it; the brute I rode fell in a flooded river, and I did not drown; I was in peril on the sea, and came safe to shore. It was decreed that I should live on.

On our arrival at New York on our way to Mexico, on January 10, 1891, I was seized upon by numbers of reporters. Now the single reporter may be dealt with, preferably by making him talk about himself, which is a subject far more interesting to him than you are; or he may be persuaded to tell you about the last person or subject upon which he has had to report. Thus, on a subsequent occasion, a reporter came on board the ship to see me before she reached her berth. Early as it was in the morning, he had already been about his paper's business, attending the electrocution of two men in a prison! The sight had impressed even his hardy nerves sufficiently to make him talk a great deal about it, describing all its details. Therefore I was called upon to furnish him with but little information about myself, though probably this was not a fact that weighed on him when it came to the writing of the interview.

Another man, who caught me in a railway train, grew so interested in talking of his own affairs that he never noticed that the train had started till it was running at quite twenty miles the hour. Then with

a yell he rushed down the carriage and leapt out into the night. I have always wondered whether he was killed or only broke his leg.

There is nothing that an American reporter will not do to attain his ends. For instance, I have known them to break into my room at midnight when I was in bed.

Once, when I was in America as a Commissioner, the reporter of a great paper did his best to make me express opinions on some important matter connected with the internal policy of the United States. Naturally I declined, but this did not prevent my alleged views upon the question from appearing everywhere. Then followed leading articles in some of the best papers gravely lecturing me and pointing out how improper it was that one who had been received with so much courtesy, and who occupied a diplomatic position, should publicly intervene in the domestic affairs of the country to which he had been sent by his Government. A famous comic journal, also, published a cartoon of me in a pulpit engaged in lecturing the American people.

Needless to say, I was extremely annoyed, but of redress I could obtain none. Contradiction where the country is so vast and newspapers are so many is hopeless. However, when I was leaving New York another representative of the same great paper came to interview me on the steamer, and to him I expressed my feelings. He listened ; then replied, with a somewhat sickly smile, ‘ Very annoying, Mr. Haggard, but I guess it would be scarcely loyal of me to give our man away, would it ? ’

Nothing could exceed the kindness with which we were received in the United States—even the reporters were kind till it came to cold print. Really I think that Americans are the most hospitable people in the

world. I will go further and say that nobody is so nice or sympathetic or broad-minded or desirous of all good as a really first-class American, man or woman. I remember that on the occasion of this visit we were quite glad to escape from New York, where literally we were being killed with kindness. To feast with some hospitable host at every meal, from breakfast till a midnight supper, after a week or so becomes more than the human frame can bear.

From New York we went to the beautiful city of New Orleans, where also we were widely entertained. One dinner-party I shall never forget. Upon each napkin lay a little poem anent something I had written. For instance, here is one which evidently refers to 'The World's Desire' :

Upon thy breast the ' *bleeding Star* ' of love,  
Ethercalised, and freed from *serpent* taint,  
Is all afire, O burnished dove !  
For whom men fail and faint !

Moreover, in the middle of dinner someone—I think it was our hostess—rose and read a poem at me. Though very kindly meant, it was really most embarrassing, especially as I had no poem ready with which to reply.

In New Orleans, amongst other places of much interest, I was shown a park in which duels used to be fought in the early days, and a graveyard where, because of the water in the soil, the dead are buried in niches in the surrounding walls.

Leaving that most hospitable city, we travelled on to El Paso, then quite a small town on the Mexican border. I remember that in the train I fell into conversation with a gentleman who, much to my astonishment, informed me that in the future we should tele-

graph through the air without the use of any connecting wires, and furnished me with the details of how this would be done. At the time I confess it occurred to me that he was amusing himself by gammoning a stranger who was known to write romances. Now, however, I see that at the commencement of the year 1891 there was at any rate one person who was very well acquainted with the system of wireless telegraphy which is now identified with the name of Mr. Marconi, then a lad of sixteen years of age.

There were at this time two railway lines running from the States to Mexico City, and I recollect that we hesitated long by which of them we should travel. Our choice was fortunate, since the train which left on the same day by the other line met with many adventures. Amongst other things it was twice thrown off the rails by intelligent Mexicans actuated either by spite or the hope of plunder, and some of its occupants were killed. Mexico, even in those days, was a wonderful city of almost Parisian appearance ; but I confess that what interested me more than its tramways and fine modern buildings were such relics of old Mexico as could be seen in the museum and elsewhere, and the mighty volcano of Popocatepetl, which the Aztecs feared and worshipped, towering to the skies. The cathedral also, built by the early Spanish conquerors, is a remarkable church, though, owing to the rarity of the air at that height above sea-level, I should not recommend any visitor who has doubts as to the condition of his heart to follow our example and climb to the top of its tower.

I think I mentioned that the original cause of my visit to Mexico was the tale of a certain hidden treasure which appealed to all my romantic instincts. This was the story so far as I can recollect it.

In Mexico Mr. Jebb knew a certain Cuban called Don Anselmo. This man, who was a geologist, was prying about on the farther shore of Lake Tezcoco, when a Mexican emerged from some bushes and remarked that he saw that Anselmo knew the secret which he thought belonged to himself alone. Anselmo, being no fool, pumped him, and out came the story. It appears that an aged cacique confided to the Mexican the plans and inventory of that portion of the treasure of the Aztecs which was recaptured from the Spaniards in the disaster of the *Noche triste*. This inventory set out a list of eighteen large jars of gold, either in the form of ornaments or dust, several jars full of precious stones, much arms and armour, also of gold, and lastly a great golden head more than life-size, being a portrait of the Emperor Montezuma. The plan showed where and how all this wealth had been disposed of in a pit sixty feet deep, at the bottom of which was a great rock covered with Aztec writing. The mouth of this pit was on the land where Anselmo was pursuing his geological researches, and marked by two ancient trees planted near to it by the Aztecs when they buried the treasure.

The only stipulation made by the old cacique when he revealed the secret, which came straight down to him from his forefather who had helped Guatemo to bury the treasure, was that it should never be given up to Government or to any Spaniard.

Needless to say, the Mexican and Don Anselmo entered into a partnership. Anselmo tried to raise funds to buy the property. Failing in this, he got the leave of the proprietor to prospect for sulphur, and, with some others, began to dig at the spot indicated on the plan. All went well. The Mexican kept away native loungers by announcing that devils dwelt in the

hole. The pit was cleared out, and at the depth of sixty feet was found the great stone, on which was cut an owl, the crest or totem mark of Guatemoec. Unfortunately, just at this time the excavators were advised that the property had been sold to a new owner, who was coming to inspect it. All night long they worked furiously at the stone, which at last they destroyed with dynamite. A tunnel was revealed beyond, running at right angles into the side of the hill, till some steps were reached that mounted upwards. On one of these steps lay the copper head of a spear. At the top of them, however, was a very solid wall of some hard material which had been fused by heat.

The excavators retreated, baffled by lack of time and this impenetrable wall. They filled in the shaft, hurling down it the boles of the two trees that Guatemoec had planted, and ran before the new owner arrived, announcing that they had found no sulphur.

Ultimately Anselmo approached Mr. Jebb, who was known to have influence with the member, or ex-member, of the Government who had acquired the property. From him Jebb obtained permission to dig for antiquities on his estate. I remember the arrival of the formal letter of leave, but not what stipulations were made as to the disposal of any articles that might be found. Full of hope that it would fall to our lot to discover the golden head of Montezuma and the jars of treasure and of jewels, with the help of Señor Anselmo we were making our preparations once more to clear that shaft when the terrible news of which I have spoken arrived. After its receipt I had no heart to enter upon the adventure.

A year or so later Jebb returned to Mexico to find, I think, that the Mexican concerned was dead and that Anselmo had vanished, none knew where. It was

suggested that he had been murdered by Indians who knew that he held the secret of their ancient wealth. But whether this was so or not I cannot say.

The site of the shaft is, I suppose, now lost, although of course some of the peons that assisted in the clearing of the pit may remember its whereabouts, if they still live. I understand, however, that only Anselmo and the Mexican actually destroyed the covering stone engraved with an owl and explored the passage and flight of steps beyond. The peons probably thought that they were really digging for sulphur without the permission of the proprietor of the land.

The story as it stands is, I admit, like most such stories, rather vague, but for my part I believe, as did the late Mr. Jebb, that Montezuma's treasure or a large part of it remains buried in this place. That it is buried somewhere is not to be doubted, for the Spaniards never recovered what was lost in the rout of the *Noche triste*. Indeed, my impression is, although I cannot verify this without rereading all the old chroniclers, that they put many Indians to the torture, including Guatemooc himself, as I have described in 'Montezuma's Daughter,' in order to force them to reveal its hiding-place. However this may be, I doubt whether the golden head of Montezuma and the jewels which he wore will ever again see the light of day. The Aztecs buried them deeply, having time at their disposal; no plough or surface excavation will reveal them, and the place of their sepulture is lost. And this must anyhow be pleasing to the shade of the heroic Guatemooc.

By a little stretch of the imagination one might almost fancy that this hoard still lies under the protection of the evil Aztec gods, of one of which I will now tell the story.

Shortly before I went to Mexico, in the course of some drainage works which were then being begun at a distance from the city—I think the place was called Zumpango, but of this I am not sure—a peculiarly hideous idol was discovered. It was grey in colour, but, if I remember rightly, more or less blotched with pink, and its head was sunk almost between the shoulders, while I can only describe the face as devilish. On its disinterment it is a fact that the Indians of the neighbourhood identified it at once, by the tradition which had descended from father to son among them, as a slaughter-idol of the Aztecs which had been buried at this spot to save it from destruction by the Spaniards in the time of Cortés, and there remained in seclusion until the year 1890. Its resurrection is said to have occasioned great excitement among them.

One of the old chroniclers—I think it is Bernal Diaz—describes the finding of the Place of Sacrifice over which this idol presided. If I recollect aright he says that they saw a pole from the top of which the idol itself had been removed, and that the said pole was built all round with the skulls of human victims whose hearts had been torn out as an offering to it. In short, the pedigree of the thing seems to be well authenticated. As Mrs. Jebb describes in the Life of her husband, Jebb, an ardent collector of curiosities, was very anxious to obtain this blood-stained relic, which he offered to buy at no mean price. The finder, however, could not be tempted to part with it, and there the matter remained. One day, however, to Jebb's great astonishment, the idol arrived on the back of a native, unaccompanied by any note or word of explanation, and was deposited in his flat in the city of Mexico, where he found it on his return home. When I visited him very shortly afterwards one of the

first things that I saw in the house was this ill-omened effigy of Huitzilpotchli, or whatever god it represented, grinning a welcome across the *patio*. Now by some strange chance from that moment forward, as Mrs. Jebb tells, everything went wrong with her husband's affairs. His health broke, companies with which he was connected collapsed, mines proved unpayable, and, lastly, he sold a reversionary interest in a considerable sum for a third of its value on the very day before the life-tenant died ! Such were some, but by no means all, of the catastrophes that overwhelmed him, which cause one to wonder for what exact reason the finder had parted gratis with this peculiar treasure for which shortly before he had refused good gold.

One of the places in which we stayed in Mexico was a huge *hacienda* situated by a lake. This vast house had once been a monastery, and the great chamber in which we slept was still hung round with the portraits of ill-favoured abbots. A feature of the house consisted of its almost endless cemented roofs, on which we used to walk. It was tenanted by the two bachelor stewards of the great estate, who kept mastiff dogs to guard them at night, friendly creatures enough when once mutual confidence had been established. Altogether that *hacienda* was not a cheerful residence to my mind, although the wild-fowl shooting on the lake was excellent and the farming operations that were carried on interested me much.

Shortly after the receipt of the desolating news of which I have written, in order to try to occupy our minds we made an expedition to a place called Pinal among the mountains, where, with Mr. Jebb, we were the guests of a gentleman named Stockdale who had charge of a silver mine in which Jebb was interested. It was a spot of extraordinary loveliness, with its deep

valleys and pine-clad heights, but the journey there on horseback was very rough. Sometimes the road ran along the dry bed of a river, where the animals stumbled from stone to stone, while at others it wended on the edge of precipices. Down one of these precipices I nearly disappeared, for my horse, a wooden brute, took the opportunity to fall at a spot where the two-foot-wide path had been washed away by rain, in such a fashion that his front legs were on one side of the gap and his hind part on the other. How I escaped I am sure I do not know. Mr. Stockdale used to gallop along these paths, although once he and his horse fell over the edge and were saved only by being caught in the flat top of a thick thorn tree. He laughed at my dislike of them. A while afterwards I heard that he had fallen from such a path and been dashed to pieces. He was a young Englishman of the best sort, one of that gallant breed whose bones whiten every quarter of the earth.

The traveller on these mountain paths in Mexico will notice many wooden crosses set up against the rocky walls. Each of these shows that here a death has occurred, sometimes by accident, more frequently by murder, which amongst these half-savage and half-bred people—the product, many of them, of intercourse between the Spaniard and the Indian—is or used to be of common occurrence. (Now I observe that under the name of Revolution the Mexicans are butchering each other wholesale in the hope of securing the plunder of the State, which has grown wealthy under the rule of the fugitive Diaz.)

I remember that we reached Pinal on a Saturday, the night on which the peons get drunk on *mescal* and *aqua ardiente* and fight over gambling and women. On the Sunday morning I walked down the street of

the village, where I saw two men lying dead with blankets thrown over them. A third, literally hacked to pieces by *machetes*, was seated in a collapsed condition in a doorway, while the village barber tried to sew up his hideous wounds. I do not know what became of him. Such was the Mexico of those days.

One of the towns that we visited on this journey was a place named Queretaro, with a *plaza* where the band played, for all the Mexicans are musical, and the young people walked about in the evening. I felt so ill there that I thought I must be going to die; but a travelling American doctor whom I met in the place, and who, good fellow that he was, kindly examined me, told me that I was suffering from nothing except shock to the nerves.

At Queretaro I was taken up a hill and shown the wall against which the unhappy Emperor Maximilian had been butchered some five-and-twenty years before. In this town, as in most others in Mexico, the church bells seemed to ring continually, as I was informed, to frighten away the devils, of whom there must in truth be many in that land—if devils exist anywhere outside the human heart.

We made some part of the return journey from Pinal in a kind of diligence that we hired. It was reported that brigands were active in the country through which we had to pass, and therefore we were not best pleased when a fat Mexican, who was convoying a huge mass of pure silver from some mine, insisted upon joining our party. When asked why he was so determined upon the point, he answered: 'Oh! I have silver; in front hide brigands. You are Englishmen, and *the English will always fight!*' However, we saw nothing of these brigands, perhaps because of the warlike reputation of our race.

On our return to Mexico City I undertook a longer journey to the State of Chiapas, then rarely visited by Europeans, where Jebb was interested in a certain mine, in which, to my sorrow, I had shares. The original arrangement was that we were to have travelled to the marvellous ruins of Palenque, which were built by some pre-Aztec race. But this was given up for the same reason that we gave up digging for Montezuma's treasure. In place of it it was settled that Jebb and I should make the journey to the Chiapas mine and, returning thence at a certain date, meet our wives on the New York steamer off the port of Frontera, where she called, and thence proceed with them to the States and England. Of course it miscarried, as most things do, or did, in Mexico, as I shall tell presently. Indeed, as I can see now, the whole expedition was of a somewhat crack-brained order, but at the time I cared little what I did.

Jebb and I proceeded from Mexico to Vera Cruz by the wonderful railway which winds from the 7000 feet high tableland, past the glorious mountain of Orizaba to the coast. Then the train only ran in the day-time in charge of an armed guard, for fear of brigands who could be relied upon to throw it off the line at night. I recall one town or village which we passed where there were, I think, thirteen churches and twelve houses, or so I was told. The churches were said to have all been built by successful brigand captains when they retired from business in the neighbourhood in order to expiate their not inconsiderable crimes. By the way, I think it was on my journey to Pinal that I passed through a place of some size where we saw only a few sullen old men and some women and children. The rest of the male population had recently been killed out by the *rurales*, or mounted guards, I forget for what

cause. Indeed all my recollections of Mexico are somewhat fragmentary, for at the time I made no notes of my experiences, and after a lapse of over twenty years the memory is apt to retain only such occurrences and scenes as struck it with peculiar force.

At Vera Cruz, a beautiful but, at that time, unwholesome town, for yellow fever was still prevalent there and the vultures were the chief safeguards of the public health (they sat on the scavengers' carts as these went their rounds), we caught the steamer which was to land us at Frontera. I had left Mexico City with the worst cold I ever experienced, contracted originally through my folly in opening the window of a stifling Pullman car, not knowing that we were to run over high mountains in the night. It was so bad that I had to pull my eyelids open in the morning, and even my ears were stopped up ; nor could I shake it off in the piercing atmosphere of the central Mexican tableland. The mild and beautiful climate of the coast, however, acted on me like magic, and before I had been twelve hours at sea I was almost well again.

On the day after leaving Vera Cruz we reached Frontera, at the mouth of a great stream that I think was named the Tobasco River. Frontera was a village with a long wide street of which the population appeared to me to show many traces of white blood. It was a horrible hole. The inn, if it could so be called, in which we slept, if I remember right, stood partly on piles in the water like a lake dwelling ; in the garden or yard great hogs rummaged, while vultures sat upon the railing of the verandah. Mosquitoes buzzed about by millions, and the face of the boy who waited on us was covered with open sores, resulting, I was told, from fever. Many of the children, also, were fever-stricken, since here malaria seemed to

have a favourite home. Only the great river, with its palm-clad banks, was beautiful.

On the following day we started up this river, lying in a canoe towed by a naphtha launch, in which canoe we slept, or tried to sleep, all night. Never in all my life—no, not even at Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee—did I meet with so many or such ferocious mosquitoes! I tied my trousers and my sleeves round my ankles and wrists with string, but they bit through the cloth, and when I looked in the morning where the dogskin gloves ended on the wrists were great bracelets of white bumps. Then there were little grey flies called *gehenn*, or some such name, which were worse than the mosquitoes, since the effect of their bites lasted for days, and, when one went ashore, *garrapatas* or tiny ticks that buried themselves in the flesh and, if removed, left their heads behind them. Perhaps these were the greatest torments of the three. Altogether the banks of the Tobasco River cannot be recommended as a place of residence.

In due course we arrived at a town called St. Juan Bautista, where we stopped for a night or two with some Mexicans who had an interest in the mine we were to visit. They were kind in their way, but what I chiefly recollect about the place are the remains of an ox that had been slaughtered within a yard or two of the verandah, just beyond a beautiful Hibiscus bush in flower, and some soup composed apparently of oil in which livid cockscombs bobbed up and down. Thence we proceeded up the river in the naphtha launch, of which the machinery continually broke down. This was the pleasantest part of the journey.

At length, leaving the launch, we came to a village of which the name escapes me, a straggling place whereof the central street was paved with rough

cobbles. Here we slept in a house belonging to some lady who was a great personage in the village, and beautifully situated upon a cliff at the foot of which ran a sparkling river that reminded me of a salmon stream in Scotland. Here also Jebb and I very narrowly escaped being murdered. It came about thus :

We had in our charge a mule-load of silver of the value of three thousand dollars, which we were conveying to a mine whither went more bullion than ever came out of it. The knowledge of our possession of this treasure came to the ears of the inhabitants of the place, among whom were a goodly proportion of brigands and cut-throats and, as we discovered afterwards, some of these made a plot to kill us and steal the silver. It happened that Jebb and I were alone in the house of which I have spoken, save, I think, for the widow lady and one or two Indian servants who slept in a different part of the big place. Our rooms (mine was half filled with Indian corn) were at either end of a large eating-chamber which overlooked the valley. They were fitted with latchless or broken French windows. The plan of attack was, as someone confessed afterwards, to climb up a sloping wall built of loose stones, kill us with *machetes*, find where the silver might be (as a matter of fact it was under Jebb's bed) and retire with the spoil. As police were lacking and our own folk were camped at a distance, in the Mexico of those days this scheme seemed easy of accomplishment, since two men surprised at night could not have done much against a band of armed assassins.

About midnight an attempt was made to put it into operation. The robbers arrived and began to climb the wall ; afterwards we saw their footprints on the mosses and the displaced stones. For some reason, however, Jebb was suspicious and, when he

was disturbed by the furious barking of the dogs belonging to the house, he rose and went to the boltless window, whence he overheard the thieves whispering together at the bottom of the wall. I also was awakened by the barking of the dogs, but, after making sure that my pistol was at hand under my pillow, went to sleep again. For the rest of the story I will quote what I wrote in my Introduction to Mrs. Jebb's Life of her husband :

Retreating to the bed he [*i.e.* Jebb] seated himself on the edge of it, holding a wax match in one hand and his long-barrelled Colt cocked in the other. This was his plan : to wait till he heard the thieves push open the French windows, then to strike the match (for the night was pitch dark), and by its light to fire at them over it before they could attack him.

For a long while he sat thus, and twice he heard the loose stones dropping as his assailants began to climb up the wall beneath the window ; but on each occasion they were frightened by the clamour of the dogs, which at length grew so loud that, thinking our Indian servants, who slept at a distance from the house, would be aroused, the thieves took to flight without the dollars, leaving nothing but some footprints behind them.

'And why did you not come and wake me ?' I asked when he had finished his tale.

'Oh !' he answered, 'I nearly did so, but I knew that you were very tired ; also there was no use in both of us handing in our checks : for there were a dozen of those devils, and, had they got into the room, they would have made a clean sweep of us.'

I did not make any reply ; but I remember thinking, and I still think, that this conduct showed great courage and great unselfishness on the part of Mr. Jebb. Most people would have retreated at the first alarm ; but this, with the utter fearlessness which was one of his characteristics, he did not do, since the dollars in his charge were too heavy to carry, and; before men could be found to assist him, they would have been secured by the robbers, who knew well where to look for them.

In the rare event, however, of the supply of personal pluck proving equal to such an occasion, how many of us, for the reasons given, having a well-armed white companion at hand, would have neglected to summon him to take his part in the fray? A man must be very brave and very unselfish indeed to choose to face a band of Mexican cut-throats when a word would bring a comrade to his side.

I may add that his conduct was foolish as well as unselfish, since in such a business two can fire quicker than one. Also the sound of the first shot would of course have wakened me with the result that I should have rushed, bewildered and unprepared, into the fray and probably have been cut down before I understood the situation.

However, as it happened, we escaped, thanks to that noble animal, the dog. So did the cold-blooded villains who had planned our murder in order to enrich themselves.

What a land of bloodshed Mexico has been, is still, in this year of revolution, and some prophetic spirit tempts me to add, shall be! The curse of the bloody Aztec gods seems to rest upon its head. There, from generation to generation, blood calls for blood. And yet, if only it were inhabited by some righteous race, what a land it might be with its richness and its beauty! For my part, I believe that it would be well for it if it should pass into the power of the United States.

From this place of a forgotten name we proceeded to the mine on mules. It was a fearful journey, but how long it took to accomplish I cannot remember. For the first part of it the road, if it could be called a road, consisted of a kind of corduroy of little ridges with mud-holes of from one to three feet deep between them, which had been gradually hollowed out by the feet of mules, the ridges being those portions of the





Portrait of a girl

LARA HOGAN

ground on which these did not tread. As heavy rains had fallen and, indeed, were still falling, the pleasures of such a ride may well be imagined. Once we stopped at a *hacienda* where there was a cocoa plantation that I was told produced a great deal of money in that fertile soil. I shall never forget the place, or at least the impression it produced upon me. In a long low room a fat half-breed, its owner, was swinging in a hammock or rather being swung by Indian girls. Terrible stories were told of such men and their poor Indian slaves in these remote places, for in practice slaves they still remained, especially with reference to the young women who grew up upon their estates. Whether things have bettered since that day I do not know, but, if certain works that I have read are true, I gather that in such matters they remain much the same as they were two hundred years ago.

After the corduroy road plains we passed into the mountains where, by the hollowing action of water, the tracks had been reduced to a kind of ditch floored with a butter of red clay. Here there were precipices, along the edges of which we ambled. One spot remains firmly fixed upon my mind. The path along the precipice had been broken away and a new one made a little further up the hillside. When we reached the place I tried to turn my mule to this upper path. But the wooden-mouthed brute was of a different opinion. Baggage mules, I should explain, always prefer the edge of a precipice, because their burdens are less likely to be knocked by projecting rocks or other mules. Therefore, this beast that I rode insisted upon taking the lower path. The natural result followed: we began to descend the red butter slide with great rapidity. There was neither time nor room to dismount. All appeared to be over, since a few

yards in front, the path having, as I said, been washed away, was empty space. However, just in time, the mule itself awoke to the situation. I presume that its inherited experience told it that to be dashed to pieces is not agreeable. At any rate it put on some kind of vacuum brake of its own, with the result that we pulled up on the extremest edge of nothingness ; indeed, it seemed to me that when our slide came to its end all the creature's four feet were gathered in a round that might have been covered by a Mexican priest's hat. Afterwards that same mule, the most incompetent surely of all its kind, fell with me in the midst of a flooded river.

Another such river we were obliged to cross seated in a loop of string which was slung upon a rope, quite an exciting mode of progression. Upon the occasion of Mr. Jebb's previous visit to this mine either the loop or the rope broke, and the cook who was making the journey went to a watery grave.

We slept a night in a saw-mill that had been established by the mining company upon the banks of a great river. I remember that at dawn I went to bathe in this river, and was struck with the marvellous beauty of the scene. The face of the water was covered with clouds of floating mist, while above, rising in tiers from the steep banks of the river, appeared the motionless, solemn trees. And then the indescribable silence and the utter loneliness. The great primeval forest beyond this river was very wonderful, at any rate to me who had never seen its like. Here grew vast trees with rib-like roots that ran far up the trunk, and between the trees impenetrable thickets of Indian Shot—Canna, I think, is the right name—twenty feet and more in height. When the Indians wish to grow a crop of maize they burn a patch of this Canna scrub

and sow the seed in the rich ash-fertilised soil, where it bears abundantly.

These Indians of remoter Mexico are strange, sad creatures whose demeanour suggests that the woes and wickedness heaped upon their forefathers by the cruel Spaniards have never faded from the minds of the descendants. In body they are handsome and often stately, but their souls seem crushed. Now they, whose race once was free and great, as the mighty ruins show, are but hewers of wood and drawers of water, whom the white man kills if they venture to cross his desire. On the narrow mountain paths or in the depths of the vast forests the traveller meets them toiling forward under the weight of some tremendous load. Humbly the poor creatures, in whose veins perhaps flows the blood of Montezuma, draw aside and stand resting on their long sticks while the white lords pass. Then once more they begin their patient journeyings.

By the way, I saw a very curious 'mackintosh' in use among these Chiapas Indians. It consisted of two huge leaves, I suppose of some water plant, which were fastened together at the base, leaving a hole for the wearer's head. These leaves, thus arranged, hung to below the middle before and behind, and were impermeable even to the tropical Mexican rain. A long line of men clad in them presented the strangest of sights.

We arrived at the mine at last, and spent some days there. It was in the charge of an English gentleman whose name I am sorry to say I have quite forgotten, but who received us with much kindness. He had built himself, or the company had built for him, a long low house with a verandah and some spare rooms, in one of which I slept. After the mosquito-haunted

canoe and our other nocturnal habitations, that clean little room seemed an almost celestial abode. Tarantulas were very plentiful about the house and, going to bed one night, I perceived a specimen of inconceivable size—really it looked as large as a plate—sitting on the ceiling immediately above my head, and shouted for assistance. My host arrived and, after inspection of the monster, exclaimed : ‘ For goodness’ sake don’t touch it ! That isn’t a tarantula, that’s the chap who lives upon tarantulas ! ’ I accepted the explanation, but asked him to be good enough to remove this household god to his own room.

While Jebb was engaged in the affairs of the mine I wandered about the beautiful valley in which it was situated, collecting plants and ferns. The vegetation here was truly wonderful, while palms and other trees, covered with ferns and orchids to their crowns, presented a lovely sight. Only, because of the snakes which were said to abound, it was necessary to be very careful in gathering these floral treasures. With much difficulty I succeeded in bringing a sackload of roots to England, and in the greenhouses here still survive some of the plants I collected in Mexico, though certain of the ferns grew so enormous that they had to be given away. I lost that sack on an American train, and was told by the conductor to go and look for it in a very insufficiently lighted van, where presently I came to grief over some hard object. It proved to be a coffined corpse which was being ‘ mailed ’ from one part of the States to another.

Our return journey to Frontera was quite as arduous as that of which I have spoken, but in the end we arrived without having contracted fever or met with any serious mishap. Here, however, we fell victims to Mexican guile. The American steamer, with our

wives and luggage on board, was due to call on the following day, but some rascal at Frontera who was agent for the line, and also owned a tub that plied between that port and Vera Cruz, informed us that this she would not do because of a 'norther' that was coming up. Now a 'norther' is a very terrible gale which blows for days at a time in the Gulf of Mexico, making it impossible for even the finest ship to approach certain of the ports, and the agent swore that his telegraphic information as to its arrival was correct. This, of course, meant that we might look forward to, I think, another fortnight of the pleasures of Frontera.

However, the agent was ready with a remedy. The tub I have mentioned was sailing for Vera Cruz at once. It would, he said, get there before the liner left, or, if not, it would signal to the liner to stop and take us aboard. Only we must make up our minds instantly —within five minutes. We fell into the trap, paid an expensive fare, and steamed off in that dreadful ship. During the night we sighted the American liner with our wives on board, making straight for Frontera ! To communicate with her was impossible ; indeed, once he had us safe at sea the captain laughed at the idea. On the following morning the ladies arrived at Frontera, where they expected to meet us, but were told by the consummate villain of an agent who had shipped us off in his own boat on the previous day, that no Englishmen answering to our description had been even heard of at Frontera. So they were forced to proceed upon their journey in a state of some anxiety.

We also had anxieties, for the machinery of our tub broke down. There for one whole night we rolled about off the coast of Mexico, sleeping, or rather sitting,

on the coils of rope upon the deck and waiting for the promised 'norther' which now showed every sign of arrival. Fortunately, however, it did not develop until later, for, had it done so, our ship in its disabled condition would in all probability have gone to the bottom. By the following morning the engines were more or less patched up, and we crept into Vera Cruz with no baggage except the travel-stained garments in which we stood and the sack of fern roots whereof I have spoken, for such spare clothes as we possessed had been left behind.

The end of it was that we journeyed back to the City of Mexico, a place that I had hoped never to see again, where we bought a few necessaries and took the train to New York.

After five days of arduous travel, during which I suffered much from headache, we reached that city to find that our womenkind had also arrived there safely. Two or three things remain impressed upon my mind in connection with this long train journey. One is the sad and desolate aspect of the sandy wildernesses of Upper Mexico, dotted here and there with tall cacti, as these appeared in the light of the full moon. Another is the sight of a small herd of bison which we passed on the great plains of Texas, I suppose among the last that were left in that country. These I am very glad to have seen in their wild state. The third is the view of Niagara as we saw it in one wintry dawn. The train pulled up to allow us to inspect the Falls, and for a while we stood almost on the brink of the cataract watching the great ice boulders thunder to the depths below. It was a mighty and majestic scene, which the loneliness of the hour did much to enhance.

From New York we took ship for Liverpool, where

we arrived without accident in due course. I was not well at the time, having again been attacked by influenza on the voyage. Needless to say, our home-coming was very sad. After, I think, only one night in London we came to Ditchingham, where I found my two little girls dressed in black and—a grave.

## CHAPTER XV

ANDREW LANG

Death of Andrew Lang—Recent letters from him—Suggested further collaboration—Lecture tour in S. Africa proposed—Letter from Charles Longman—Queen Taia's ring.

THE day on which I commence this chapter of my reminiscences—July 22, 1912—is a sad one for me, since the first thing I saw on opening my eyes this morning was the news of the sudden death of my dear friend, Andrew Lang. It is odd that only last Thursday, when I was in London, some vague anxiety concerning him prompted me to make an effort to see Lang. Having an hour to spare before my train left, I took a taxi-cab and drove to his house in Marloes Road, to find which his direction of many years ago used to be, 'Walk down Cromwell Road till you drop, then turn to the right !'

I found the house shut up, and the Scotch girl, arriving from the lower regions, informed me that her master had left for Scotland on Tuesday. I gave my card, asking her to forward it, then called to the girl as she was shutting the door to ask how Lang was. She replied that he had been unwell, but was much better. So, perhaps for the last time, I departed from that house with which I used to be so familiar in the old days, filled with such sad thoughts and apprehensions that on my return home I mentioned them to Miss Hector, my secretary.

Perhaps these were due to the drawn, death-suggesting blinds, perhaps to the knowledge that Lang had suffered much from melancholy of late—contrary to the general idea, his was always a nature full of sadness—perhaps to some more subtle reason. At any rate, it was so.

I have not seen much of Andrew Lang of late years, for the reason that we lived totally different lives in totally different localities. The last time we met was about a year ago at a meeting of the Dickens Centenary Fund Committee, after which I walked far with him on his homeward way, and we talked as we used to talk in the days when we were so much together. The time before that was about two years ago, when I dined alone with him and Mrs. Lang at Marloes Road, and we passed a delightful evening.

Letters, too, have been scarce between us for some years, though I have hundreds of the earlier times. Here are extracts from one or two of the last which have a melancholy interest now.

*October 18, 1911.*

DEAR RIDER,—Thanks for the Hare [this refers to my tale of 'The Mahatma and the Hare']. . . . I bar chevying hares, but we are all hunted from birth to death by impecunious relations, disease, care, and every horror. The hare is not hunted half so much or half so endlessly. However, anyway, I have not chevied a hare since I was nine, and that only on my two little legs, all alone !

Yours ever,

A. LANG.

If I were the Red-faced Man I'd say that from the beginning all my forbears were hunters, that it got into the blood, and went out of the blood with advancing age, so that perhaps it might go out altogether, though I hardly think it will. And ask WHO made it so !

The W.D. ['World's Desire'] took in despite of my ill-omened name ; I brought you worse luck than you would have had alone.

Yours ever,  
A. LANG.

Do you bar ferreting rabbits ? I think it damnable.

The answer to this is dated November 13, 1911.

November 13, 1911.

MY DEAR ANDREW,—All right, you shall 'faire des objections,' *i.e.* if ever we live to get at the thing, which I can't do at present.

I think Kôr was the mother of Egypt, which kept up a filial correspondence with her oracles. 'She' smashed the place in a rage because they tried her for the murder of Kallikrates. Foundation of history—papyrus records brought home by Holly and sent with 'Ayesha' MS. Entered up by that old priest Junis, or someone.

Yes, ferreting rabbits is beastly, especially when the ferret freezes on to the rabbit in the hole. But one must get rid of rabbits somehow. Now coursing—but you know my views on the matter.

Ever yours,  
H. RIDER HAGGARD.

I find among my copies of letters one written to Lang in 1907, which also deals with the question of a further collaboration that we contemplated at this time. I had quite forgotten the matter, but now I remember that it came to nothing. Lang suggested one of the old Greek legends that ended in the most horrible all-round tragedy—I do not at the moment recall which of them it was, though I could easily discover by consulting his letters of the period.

I said that it would not do: that a twentieth-century audience would require something a little more cheerful. I think he was rather cross with me about it—if he could be cross with me, for no shadow of

real difference ever came between us. At any rate the idea fell through, for which, too late, I am very sorry now. Here is my letter:

DITCHINGHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK:  
December 28, 1907.

MY DEAR ANDREW,—I'd *like* to do another book with you before we skip—awfully. I think you were a bit discouraged about the 'W. Desire' because a lot of *ignorant* fools slated it, but in my opinion you were wrong. That work I believe will last. It is extraordinarily liked by many who can understand. I told you about the American Egyptologist I met, for instance, who reads it every night!

Well now: I don't care much for your Covenanter who would speak Scotch, etc. (*i.e.* at first sight). He would not have much of a public or enlist the heart. Can you not think of something 'big and beautiful,' something that has an *idea* in it? Something for choice that has to do with old Greece (which you know) and with old Egypt (which I know?). Something with room in it for a few of your beautiful verses (I am not laying it on, old fellow, only saying the truth). In short, a real *poetical* romance such as we might both be proud of. Now don't toss this aside, but think. You know all the old world legends: there must be some that ~~would~~ lend themselves to this general scheme: that of the quest for the divine, which must (for the purposes of story) be symbolised by woman. You see the thing must have a heart; mere adventures are not enough: I can turn *them* out by the peck. A motive, friend, a motive! that's what we need, and one that the world knows of.

How about a variant of the Faust legend? How about the Sons of God and the Daughters of Men? Something grand and pure and simple, something to lift up! Now don't be discouraged, for though we are both antique, I know that we can do it, if only we can find the theme.

Where is our Hypatia? Let's do a big thing for once and die happy! Please answer.

Yours ever,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

It is an old belief  
That on some solemn shore  
Beyond the sphere of grief  
Dear friends shall meet once more.

Beyond the sphere of Time,  
And Sin, and Fate's control,  
Serene in changeless prime  
Of body and of soul.

That creed I fain would keep,  
This hope I'll not forgo ;  
Eternal be the sleep,  
Unless to waken so.

And so to Andrew Lang, among men my best friend perhaps, and the one with whom I was most entirely in tune, farewell for a while. Of his character and gifts I have already written while he was still living, so I will say no more of them now. There are few such, and to-day the world is poorer and greyer for the loss of a pure and noble nature. For myself I am more lonely, since of those men, not my kin, whom I knew and loved while I still was young, now Charles Longman and Arthur Cochrane alone are left.

I find also another letter from Lang dated June 2, 1902, in which he informs me of the death of a second brother—' my little brother; he was always little, and ten years younger than I. . . . I tell you because you are a good fellow if ever there was one, and so was he,' etc.

I quote no more, according to the rule I have made as to certain matters which belong to the private lives of others. My answer, however, which is pinned to the letter, may be printed, as that is my affair and only portrays *my* private views.

*June 6, 1902.*

MY DEAR ANDREW,—Very well, I won't write about it ; but try to take comfort. I am sure that no affections are so perfect



ANDREW LANG

About 1886



as those which have passed through the fires of death, and often I think that as sometimes we grow away from the living, so always do we grow nearer to the desired dead—in spirit, I mean.

It is a strange world, especially to those who feel much, but the only things to do seem to be to work on to the best of one's ability, to be very sorry for one's sins, and in great humbleness to wait till the mortal tide engulfs us also—hoping that beneath or beyond it we may find peace, understanding and our perfect part. If I am sure of anything I am sure that Man has a living Spirit, and that he does not suffer so much to please the laws of Matter or a god called Chance. With true sympathy,

Your affec. friend,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

Some days after Lang's death I received a letter from Charles Longman, of which I will quote a passage that deals with the character of Andrew Lang and the friendship we both had for him.

Yes, you and I will always feel a blank when we think of Andrew Lang. He was of all men the most loyal to his friends—it was one of his most marked characteristics, and there had been a bond between us three which nothing could break. As you know, I had been anxious about him this spring, though not about his heart, which the doctor had lately examined without finding anything wrong. But his eyesight was threatened, and there was this strange depression about public affairs, which seemed as though it might grow worse. In old days when he was bright and cheerful it is little he troubled himself about strikes and such-like. So it may be that he—and those who loved him—have been spared something by his swift end. But the breaking of an unclouded friendship of five-and-forty years is no light thing : as you say, one must hope that the break is but a temporary one and that there is some other meeting-place for friends. Matt. Arnold says :

' Sad fate of every mortal lot  
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,  
And builds himself, I know not what  
Of second life, I knw not where.'

At some date before he died Lang asked his wife to give to me a certain ring in token of remembrance. I have now received and shall always wear this ring. It belonged to Queen Taia, the wife of Amenophis III, or perhaps to Nefertiti, her daughter-in-law, who married the famous Khu-en-aten, the fourth Amenophis and the remarkable Pharaoh who inaugurated what the priests of Amen considered the heresy of the worship of the Sun's Disc, by which, I take it, he symbolised the one Almighty God who made the world. On this ring, which, I think, from the length of time that it had evidently been worn, must have adorned the hand of Taia some 3500 years ago, is engraved a cat adoring Ra or the Sun, or perhaps the 'Aten' or Disc. I already possess the sister ring that, from the less amount of wear it shows, was probably worn by the shorter-lived Nefertiti, Khu-en-aten's adored and, I believe, sole wife. Both of them were obtained by us from the Rev. W. J. Loftie in the year 1887, who acquired them in Egypt when, about that time, the mummies of these queens were discovered and broken up by the Arabs at Tel-el-Amarna.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ROMANCE-WRITING

Miss Ida Hector—H. R. H. dictates his works to her—Wishes for change of occupation—Dream-pictures—H. R. H.'s theory of Romance writing—Literary coincidences—Examples from the works of H. R. H.—*The Spectator*.

WHEN I returned from Mexico in 1891 I fell into very poor health. Everything, especially my digestion, went wrong, so wrong that I began to think that my bones would never grow old. Amongst other inconveniences I found that I could no longer endure the continual stooping over a desk which is involved in the writing of books. It was therefore fortunate for me that about this time Miss Ida Hector, the eldest daughter of Mrs. Hector, better known as Mrs. Alexander, the novelist, became my secretary, and in that capacity, as in those of a very faithful friend and companion, to whose sound sense and literary judgment I am much indebted, has so remained to this day. From that time forward I have done a great deal of my work by means of dictation, which has greatly relieved its labour. Some people can dictate, and others cannot. Personally I have always found the method easy, provided that the dictatee, if I may coin a word, is patient and does not go too fast. I imagine, for instance, that it would be impossible to dictate a novel to a shorthand-writer. Also, if the person who took down the words irritated one in any

way, it would be still more impossible. Provided circumstances are congenial, however, the plan has merits, since to many the mere physical labour of writing clogs the mind. So, at least, various producers of books seem to have found. Among them I recall Thackeray and Stevenson.

Of the next few years of my life there is not much to tell. I lived here at Ditchingham in a very quiet and retired fashion, rarely visiting London, wrote a few novels, and for recreation occupied myself with farming and gardening, for which occupations I have always had an instinctive taste. The work that I did was a good deal attacked : it was the fashion to attack me in those days. Possibly owing to my ill-health some of it may not have been quite up to the mark ; I do not know. What I do know is that I grew heartily tired of the writing of stories. After the birth of my youngest child, Lilius, which to my great joy happened at the end of the year 1892, my health and spirits began to mend and my energy to return, largely owing, I think, to the treatment of my friend Dr. Lyne Stivens. I was still a youngish man, but had reached that time of life when I felt that if I was to make any change of occupation it must be done at once. And I longed to make a change, for this humdrum existence in a country parish, staring at crops and cultivating flowers, was, I felt, more suitable to some aged man whose life's work was done than to myself. Also at this time the unrealities of fiction-writing greatly wearied me, oddly enough much more than they do at present, when they have become a kind of amusement and set-off to the more serious things and thoughts with which my life is occupied.

Still it is true that even now, if circumstances allowed of it, I do not think I should write much more

fiction, at any rate of the kind that people would buy. With the exception of certain stories that I should like to tell for their own sake, and not to earn money by them, I should occupy my time with writings of a different sort, connected, probably, for the most part with the land, agriculture, and social matters. For instance, I should dearly like to finish my survey of rural England, and to undertake that of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland—tasks, I suppose, that I shall never be able to execute. Only this year<sup>1</sup> I had arranged to make an effort to investigate and write on the agriculture of Ireland. But then, of a sudden, I was appointed to the Dominions Royal Commission, and how could I find time for both? The months that I had proposed to devote to Ireland I have been obliged to spend in writing a story.

I know that folk—very superior folk—exist who affect to scorn the base person who does one kind of work when he would like to do another, merely because the former does and the latter does not pay. There is something to be said for this position, but if a man chances to realise that he does not live unto himself alone, and to have many dependent upon him, directly or indirectly, or if he chances to desire to render gratuitous services to his country, he must, in such a case, 'cut his coat according to his cloth.'

Therefore, although I should have dearly liked to place on record my views of Irish agriculture, in place thereof I have found myself obliged to edit certain of the reminiscences of Mr. Allan Quatermain. To be honest, these have amused me not a little, perhaps because I always find it easy to write of Allan Quatermain, who, after all, is only myself set in a variety of imagined situations, thinking my thoughts

and looking at life through my eyes. Indeed there are several subjects with which I always find it not difficult to deal—for instance, Old Egypt, Norsemen, and African savages. Of these last, however, I prefer to write in the company of the late Allan Quatermain.

At the time of which I am now speaking, the early nineties, it was, however, otherwise, for then, being much younger, I wearied of fiction and longed for the life of action to which I had been bred and that, indeed, is native to my character. In truth, the dislike and revolt of my heart in those days still haunts me as a kind of nightmare which is perhaps sufficiently amusing to relate.

Many people have their favourite dreams, and within the last year or so I have developed a very fair specimen of this class of illusion which comes to me in an oft-repeated vision of the mind. Who does not know that order of dream wherein we seem to move among the dead and in their company, with eager yet trembling feet, to try the cold waters of the stream of Death ?

Well, through the ivory gates of such a dream as this at times I seem to see my spiritual heritage spread large before me in a world of pictured silence. There, at the back of the picture, rises the mighty cliff whereon, at intervals, the great golden figures, which I take it are images and not alive, seem to keep watch and ward over the illimitable lands beneath ; while between them, also at intervals of scores or hundreds of leagues, pour the cataracts gathered I know not whence. In a fold of that cliff lie the blue waters of the Holy Lake, surrounded by wide cedars and huge, immemorial pines that spring two hundred feet without a bough and, at their crown, end always in a single bent plume of green, as though up on high some strong wind shaped them

with a steady hand. Along the foot of the cliff runs a great river that, like the Nile, floods the lands at certain seasons and makes them bear a hundredfold. Winding almost at right angles from the mountain slope, it flows across the boundless plain, past a white and wonderful city whose domes and palaces I only see from far away, for here my guide has never led me. There on its banks soar gracious palms ; there willows weep ; there spread aspens with leaves just about to quiver ; and there, through the sparse woodlands, roam the wild things of the New Creation, seeking their food from God and fearing no hurt from aught that serves Him. Facing this river, to the right as I see it, but far across the plain, are lovely mountains not so very lofty, where, from the other river of the lake, amidst slender ferns, rush waterfalls that descend in bursts of stirless spray.

There, too, in the east—can it be the east, I wonder ?—is the very well and fount of light : a soft but radiant light that casts no shadow, since it grows and flows above, beneath, around, and everywhere. Its shape is that of a luminous fan. While the day increases—how long that day is I do not know—so does the glory of that fan extend till it fills all those celestial skies : till it bends across them beyond the mighty cliff where stand the golden guards, as in the funeral paintings of Old Egypt the image of the goddess Nout bends across the heavens and holds the earth in her embracing arms. Then, as at length the night draws on, this wondrous fan folds itself again to a cluster of jewelled stars, large as young moons and of every lovely hue, varying from that of a kind of shining blackness to those of steel blue, and scarlet, and red fire, that girdle the firmament with a glittering belt as might do the Milky Way drawn near.

Overlooking all these wonders, at the foot of the

cliff, beyond the borders of the lake but at a lower level, in this fantastic dream of mine stands a strange and silent house built for me by hands that I have known. I see its central hall, where all those I loved or love in life steal in and out. I see a certain chamber, low and large, which overlooks the dreaming landscape, and, more nearly, the walks of garden trees hung with bells of white and purple blossom, with unknown, golden fruits and creeping strands of vine. Standing in the recessed doorway of this chamber, I see in its far corner, seated at a desk above the covered terrace, myself, younger than I am now, wearing some sort of white garments and bending over the desk at work, with papers spread before me.

At the sight a kind of terror seizes me lest this fair place should be but a scented purgatory where, in payment for my sins, I am *doomed to write fiction for ever and a day!*

'At what do I work?' I ask, alarmed, of the guide who, shining steadily, stands at my side and shows me all.

'You write the history of a world' (or was it 'of the world'?—I am not sure), is the answer, and in my dream I breathe again.

For truly it would be a horrible fate to be doomed from æon to countless æons to the composition of romance.

Of course what I have set down is but a fancy such as might come to an imaginative child. Still, that landscape, which I know as well as, if not better than, any on the earth, has charms and glories of its own. Therefore I have wasted half an hour of my time and some few minutes of my reader's in attempting very briefly to describe that which in truth no words can carry.

I confess that in any other life I should prefer some change of employment, but if I should be doomed to write there I hope that the subject-matter of my toil may, as in the vision, prove to be not fiction but history, which I love. In all the worlds above us there must be much history to record. Also there must be much good work to do, which is fortunate. At least I can conceive no idle heaven—where it ‘is always afternoon.’ To me such a place would be the reverse of heaven. To me happiness and work well done, or service faithfully accomplished, are words with a like meaning.

And now, with many apologies, I will turn to mundane things again. Before I do so, however, as I dare say I shall allude to the subject no more, I will add a word on the general matter of the writing of romances. This, I gather, from remarks that have been made to me and many letters that I have received, is supposed to be a very easy art, if indeed it is worthy to be classified under that high name. As a matter of fact it is difficult. In a novel, as the word is generally understood, the author may discourse upon a thousand topics ; nothing, or at any rate very little, is barred to him. He may burrow in the obscene depths of human nature ; he may discuss politics, religion, metaphysics, socialism, ‘love’ in all its forms, the elemental or artificial divisions between the sexes—oh ! what is there that he may not and does not discuss ? Nothing that appears in the columns of the daily papers, nothing that is within the range of the human intellect, lies beyond his legitimate, or illegitimate, scope.

In romance all this is different ; the lines between which he must move are by comparison extremely narrow : as, I remember, Besant put it admirably when answering some onslaught on myself in connection

with 'Montezuma's Daughter': 'There is but one bag of tricks in romance.'

The love interest, at least among English-speaking peoples, must be limited and restrained in tone, must follow the accepted lines of thought and what is defined as morality. Indeed it may even be omitted, sometimes with advantage. The really needful things are adventure—how impossible it matters not at all, provided it is made to appear possible—and imagination, together with a clever use of coincidence and an ordered development of the plot, which should, if possible, have a happy ending, since few folk like to be saddened by what they read. If they seek melancholy, it can be found in ample measure in real life or in the daily papers. Still, the rule of the happy ending is one that may be broken at times; at least I have dared to do so on some occasions, and notably in the instance of 'Eric Brighteyes.' I remember that Charles Longman remonstrated with me on this matter at the time, but I showed him that the story demanded it—that, although I too wept over the evil necessity, it *must* be so!

Now adventure in this narrow world of ours is a limited quantity, and imagination, after all, is hemmed in by deductions from experience. When we try to travel beyond these the results become so unfamiliar that they are apt to lack interest to the ordinary mind. I think I am right in saying that no one has ever written a really first-class romance dwelling solely, for example, upon the utterly alien life of another world or planet with which human beings cannot possibly have any touch. Homer and others bring such supernormal life into the circle of our own surroundings and vivify it by contact, or by contrast, with the play of human nature as exemplified

in their characters. But it will not stand alone. We are not strong and skilled enough to carve out of quite unknown material figures so life-like that even in a dreaming hour they can pass as real. I repeat, therefore, that the lines which close in the kingdom of romance are very narrow, and that the material which must be used is so much handled that nowadays it has become difficult to fashion from it any shape that is novel enough, or sufficiently striking to catch the attention of the world.

What is there that has not been used? Who, to take a single instance, can hope to repeat the effect of Robinson Crusoe on his desert island, or the thrill of that naked footprint in the sand? Defoe exhausted these long ago; everything of the sort that follows must be a mere *pastiche*.

To pass over other salient and familiar examples, I may with humility remark that even a second 'She' would offer difficulties to her originator. In my own day some have been tried, and proved very ephemeral creations. The stock of such ideas, in short, is being rapidly used up. There are only a certain number of pieces of glass in the kaleidoscope, and the total of the patterns that these can form is, after all, but limited. With all the world explored and exhausted, I feel sorry for the romance writers of the future, for I know not whither they will turn without bringing themselves into competition with the efforts of dead but still remembered hands and exposing themselves to the sneers of the hunters-out of 'plagiarisms.'

History remains to them, it is true, but that ground has already been well tilled. Also historical romances seem at present to be losing their hold, perhaps because the reader of to-day fears lest he should be acquiring some useful information against his will. The holiday

task, or reminiscences of it, looms largely in his mind. Still, new avenues may open to those unborn scribes of which at present we can catch no glimpse. In a day to come there may even be romances of microbes which will fix the attention and engage the imaginative faculties of dim and distant generations.

Now as to the method of romance-writing. It should, in my judgment, be swift, clear, and direct, with as little padding and as few trappings as possible. The story is the thing, and every word in the book should be a brick to build its edifice. Above all, no obscurity should be allowed. Let the characters be definite, even at the cost of a little crudeness, and so with the meaning of each sentence. Tricks of 'style' and dark allusions may please the superior critic ; they do not please the average reader, and—though this seems to be a fact that many forget, or only remember to deplore—a book is written that it may be read. The first duty of a story is to keep him who peruses it awake ; if he is a tired man and it succeeds in doing this, then, within its limitations, it is a good tale. For instance, when a year or so ago Mr. Kipling, who as a rule goes to bed early, told me that he had sat up to I know not what hour and got chilled through reading 'The Ghost Kings' because he could not lay it down, it gave me a higher opinion of that work than I could boast before. In romance 'grip' is almost everything. Whatever its faults, if a book has grip, these may be forgiven.

Again, such work should be written rapidly and, if possible, not rewritten, since wine of this character loses its bouquet when it is poured from glass to glass. It should be remembered, also, that the writer of a romance must, so far as it is concerned, live during its progress in an atmosphere quite alien to that of every-

day life. Now this in a workaday world is not easy to grown people, who perhaps have many affairs and anxieties to distract them, even if they possess or have acquired the power of dividing their brains into more or less watertight compartments. Indeed, for longer than a certain period it becomes almost impossible. Therefore, as the quality of the resulting story will depend upon the preservation of this atmosphere of romance while it is being evolved, it is highly desirable that the actual period of evolution should be short. Personally I have proved this, again and again, almost to the extent that, in the case of my own books, I can judge how long they have taken to write by their quality, although I may long have forgotten the amount of time I spent on each.

So it comes to this: the way to write a good romance is to sit down and write it almost without stopping. Of course some preliminary reflection is desirable to realise a central idea round which the story must revolve. For example, in 'She' that central idea was a woman who had acquired practical immortality, but who found that her passions remained immortal too. In 'The Holy Flower,' which I finished yesterday, to take another case, the central idea is that of a gorilla which is worshipped as a god and periodically slays the king who holds his office as the brute's priest and servant, with all the terrors that result from such a situation. In the case of both these books, as of many others, I had nothing more in my mind when I set myself to face them. Of course in such circumstances beginnings are hard—*c'est le premier pas qui coûte*—but after that the thing will generally evolve itself. It is merely a case of what Anthony Trollope used to call 'cobbler's wax.' Or, if it 'will not do so,' the author had better give up romance-

writing and take up some useful occupation that is more congenial.

Of course these are only my views, but they are based upon an experience that is now painfully extended. Other men may have other and better methods so far as they are concerned. They presuppose, however, that the writer is to a sufficient degree possessed by the Spirit of Romance, without which he will do nothing of any permanent or even of immediate value. The faculty of imaginative insight must be a part of his intellectual outfit. He must be able, as he creates, to summon each scene whereof he treats before the eyes of his mind. He must see the characters and their surroundings : the lion springing, the Zulu regiments rushing with uplifted spears, the fire eating into the grass of the hillside, while before it the scorched snakes glide and hiss. He must share the every hope and care of those whom he begets : the rich, low voice of Ayesha must thrill his nerves ; he must discern her entralling and unearthly beauty, and look into the mingled grandeur of her blasted soul !

And so on, and on ; for if he, the creator, does not know the beings and things which he creates—if the details of them are as blurred as the images in a defective glass—how can he expect to convey a clear picture to his reader ? At the best that reader must help him out, must be the possessor of a certain receptive power and able to fill in a thousand minutiae of character and so forth, for to attempt to state these would overload the story, which, be it remembered, should consist of action, action, action from the first page to the last. For the rest, little matters. Even if the writer does not know what is coming next the circumstance is of no importance, for it will come when

it is wanted. There are even advantages in this, since, if *he* does not know, it is quite certain that his reader must remain in equal ignorance—a thing to be desired.

Such is the whole art of romance-writing as it is understood by me—who, critics may say, *per contra*, do not understand it at all. To such as have sufficient experience of life and adventure in far lands, or sufficient vision to enable them to re-create the past, the gift is to be had for the taking—by those who can take. To such as lack these qualifications it is somewhat hard to grasp and hold. But even if he possesses all this equipment I would warn the future artist not to expect too much success, since a perfect specimen of the true breed of the beautiful butterfly, Romance, is rarely to be caught. After the searcher has hunted all his life, if he finds two or three of them in his cabinet he will have done very well indeed ; and even at these, connoisseurs who sit at home and do not hunt themselves will be found to cavil. In old days such specimens were perhaps more common, though but a few have survived the rust and damp of time. But then their breeding-grounds in the dank tropical marshes or the lion-haunted forests were less known, and those who devoted themselves to this chase were few in number and supremely qualified for the business. Now travelling is cheap, hundreds handle the net, and all come home with something that is offered for sale under the ancient label.

It is curious how often imagination is verified by fact—perhaps, as I said at the beginning of this screed, because the lines in which it must work are narrow and after all based on fact, perhaps because it does possess some spiritual insight of its own. Many instances have come within my own experience, of which I will quote a few that I chance to remember.

I pass over 'King Solomon's Mines,' a work of pure imagination, for in my day very little was known of the regions wherein its scenes were laid, many details of which have been verified by subsequent discovery. In its sequel, 'Allan Quatermain,' however, occurs a fine example of the literary coincidence. In this book I invented a mission station at an unexplored spot on the Tana River, which station I caused to be attacked by the Masai. In subsequent editions of the work I inserted the following note, which explains itself :

By a very strange and sad coincidence, since the above was written, the Masai, in April 1886, massacred a missionary and his wife—Mr. and Mrs. Houghton—on this same Tana River, and at the *spot described*. These are, I believe, the first white people who are known to have fallen victims to this cruel tribe.

Again, in a tale called 'Maiwa's Revenge,' I gave an elaborate description of a certain escape of Allan Quatermain from pursuing savages, who hunted him up the face of a cliff and seized hold of his ankles. He freed himself from their attentions by firing down on them along the line of his leg with a pistol. Some years later a gentleman arrived at this house whose name, I think, was Ebbage, and on whose card was printed the vague and remote address, 'Matabeleland.' He informed me that he had travelled specially from London to inquire how on earth I had learned the details of his escape from certain savages, as he had never mentioned them to a single soul. Before he left I satisfied myself that his adventure and that invented by myself and described in the tale, which I had thought one of a somewhat original sort, were in every particular identical.

Again, in 'Mr. Meeson's Will' I set out very fully

indeed the circumstances under which a new and splendid liner was lost at sea, and the great majority of those on board of her were drowned owing to lack of boats to accommodate them. In a preface to this story, written in the year 1888, I make the following remark :

The only part of this humble skit, however, that is meant to be taken seriously is the chapter which tells of the loss of the R.M.S. *Kangaroo*. I believe it to be a fair and, in the main, accurate account of what must and one day will happen upon a large and crowded liner in the event of such a collision as that described, or of her rapid foundering from any other cause. It is a remarkable thing that people who for the most part set a sufficient value on their lives, daily consent to go to sea in ships the boats of which could not on emergency possibly contain half their number.

During the present year this prophecy, and indeed the whole scene of the sinking of the *Kangaroo*, has been fearfully fulfilled in the instance of the great White Star liner *Titanic*. If I could think of and foresee such things, how is it that those who are responsible for the public safety have proved themselves so lacking in prevision—that section of the Board of Trade, for instance, whose duty it is to attend to such matters ?

I fear we must seek the answer in the character of our nation, whose peculiarity it is to ignore or underrate dangers that are not immediately visible, and therefore never to be ready to meet them. If anyone doubts this, let him study the history of our wars during the last sixty years or so, and even earlier. The Crimea, the Abyssinian Expedition, the first Boer War, the Zulu War, the second Boer War, which was the child of the last two, the Egyptian Wars, have all told the same tale. With the details of three of these

I have been acquainted, and they are awful. Only our wealth has brought us out of them—I will not say with honour, but in safety. We declare proudly that ‘we always muddle through,’ but this, after all, is a boast that only fits the lips of the incompetent. What will happen when we are called upon to meet a nation, or nations, of equal or greater strength, that are competent ?<sup>1</sup> One can only hope for the best, and that the genius of our people, or of individuals among them, may carry us through in the future as it has done in the past. Meanwhile we blunder on. England, in lives and treasure, pays the bill out of her ample but not bottomless pocket, and everything ends in a rocket-burst of decorations conferred amid the shouts of the devotees of music-halls.

Probably the blame is to be laid at the door of our national lack of imagination : we cannot embody in our minds or provide against that of which we have had no recent experience. We live from hand to mouth, and think more of the next elections than of our future as a people and a great Empire, refusing to bear those small burdens that would make us safe, and to support statesmen rather than politicians. Any who point out these things are cried down as alarmists, or as persons seeking some personal or party end, since the petty and the mean always see their own colours reflected in the eyes of others. Like the large farmer who confided to me his conviction that I was travelling on my tour of agricultural investigation through England in search of ‘ free drinks,’ these judge by their own low standards. ‘Free drinks,’ or their equivalent, is what *they* want, and therefore must be what *you* want, since otherwise why should anyone work for

<sup>1</sup> This was written in 1912, and has been lying in Messrs. Longmans’ safe without the author having access to it since that date.—ED.

nothing? And here comes the sorrow. The little minds, Shakespeare's multitude who 'suckle fools and chronicle small beer,' are in the vast majority. They have the votes and give power to their chosen. The rest are but voices crying in the wilderness. Well, there it is, and doubtless God Almighty knows the way out. At any rate, it must be a part of His plan, so why should we grumble?

Another small instance of imagination being justified in my own case is to be found in my tale, 'Stella Fregelius,' where, for the purposes of that mystical story, I invented an instrument which I called the 'aerophone,' whereby people could speak with each other across a space of empty air. When I wrote this story, about the year 1898, neither I nor anyone else had heard of such a machine. Now I learn that it is working and patented under the same title, namely, 'aerophone,' and doubtless ere long it will be in general use. It is right, however, that, *per contra*, I should chronicle a prophetic failure. In 'Doctor Therne' I ventured to suggest that our general neglect of vaccination would bring about some outburst of smallpox such as in past days swept away our forefathers by the thousand, and still sweeps away uninstructed peoples. As yet this has not happened, but who can be bold enough to assert that it will never happen?

Perhaps the most curious example of a literary coincidence with which I have been personally concerned is to be found in the case of my story, 'Fair Margaret.' As it is fully and concisely set out in the issue of the *Spectator* of October 19, 1907, I will quote my letter published in that journal, leaving the reader to form his own opinion on the matter.

SIR,—The following instance of imagination being verified by fact may interest students of such matters. Two years

or so ago I wrote an historical romance which has recently appeared under the title of 'Fair Margaret.' In that romance the name of the hero is Peter Brome. The father of this Peter Brome is represented in the tale as having been killed at Bosworth Field. After the appearance of the book I received a letter from Colonel Peter Brome Giles, the High Sheriff of Bucks, asking me where I obtained the particulars concerning the said Peter Brome. I answered—out of my own head. Indeed, I distinctly remember inventing the name as being one that I had never heard, and the fact of the father's death on Bosworth Field I introduced to suit the exigencies of the story. In reply to my request for further particulars, Colonel Brome Giles kindly sent me a letter, from which, in view of the curious interest of the matter, I am sure he will forgive me for publishing the following extracts.

' Your hero's father was the son of Sir Thomas Brome, the Secretary of Henry VI. He was, as you relate, killed at Bosworth, but I never heard they had property in Essex, but had in Suffolk<sup>1</sup> and Norfolk. . . . One branch of the family took the bird' [that is, as a coat-of-arms] 'as you describe. . . . The father of your hero was the first Peter, and was born 1437, and was 50 when killed. . . . Since the Peter of 1437 there have always been Peter Bromes: my father was, I am, and so is my boy. We assumed Giles in 1761.'

To this I sent the following answer :

' All I can say is that the coincidence is extremely curious (for I knew nothing whatsoever of all this), so much so indeed that, taken in conjunction with some similar instances which have occurred to me, almost do I begin to believe in retrospective second sight.'

If I may judge from my own experience, such coincidences (and, as anyone who has read the tale in question will admit, this is a very remarkable coincidence) are by no means uncommon. Although the particulars are too long to set out, four times at the very least have they happened to myself in the case of my own works of imagination. I do not know if

<sup>1</sup> My hero's property was at Dedham, in Essex, a few miles over the Suffolk border.—H. R. H.

any of your readers can suggest an explanation. The odds against such exact similitudes seem so tremendous that I confess I am unable to do so. I am, Sir, etc.,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

(It almost looks as if Mr. Rider Haggard when he thought he was inventing was unconsciously receiving random and accidental brain-waves, *& la* Marconi, from Colonel Brome Giles. Was Colonel Brome Giles, we wonder, working at pedigree questions at the time when Mr. Rider Haggard was planning his novel?—ED., *Spectator*.)

Another very curious imaginative parallel occurs in my novel, 'The Way of the Spirit.' In this tale, the scene of which is laid in Egypt of to-day, I introduced five weird native musicians, whom I named the Wandering Players, three of whom performed on pipes and two upon drums. Thrice did the hero, Rupert Ullershaw, meet this band in the deserts of the Sudan, but never could he speak with them, since they would answer no questions and accept no *baksheesh*. They simply appeared and disappeared mysteriously, and the sound of their sad music always proved the herald of misfortune to poor Rupert—the suggestion being that they were not quite canny in their origin. These musicians were a pure effort of invention so far as I am concerned. I had never read or heard that any such folk were supposed to haunt this very desert of which I was writing.

Imagine, therefore, my astonishment when, in a copy of his 'Notes de Voyage' for 1909 which Sir Gaston Maspero kindly sent me—'The Way of the Spirit' was written in 1905—I found the following passage :

Ces quatre-là sont-ils alliés aux quatre *afrites* musiciens, deux joueurs de flûte et deux joueurs de tambourin ou de *darabouka*, qui hantent le désert dans les mêmes parages?

Ils jouent sur le passage des voyageurs et c'est toujours un mauvais présage que de les rencontrer : si on s'éloigne vite sans leur adresser la parole et, autant que possible, sans les regarder, on a quelque chance d'échapper au mauvais sort, sinon l'on est perdu.

It will be observed that here everything is the same, *mise en scène*, misfortune, all. There is but one difference. Of Sir Gaston's *afrites*, or musical ghosts, there were four; of my wandering players, five. I have added a third flutist by way of interest on the capital of the true legend.

Perhaps these examples of literary coincidence in my own books may suffice, though I think there are more. Indeed I recall two in connection with 'Heart of the World' and 'Ayesha' respectively, which are curious enough in their way. Also as I write it comes back to me that there are yet two others which, as I am on the subject, I may as well state quite briefly.

The first of these is to be found in 'Montezuma's Daughter.' Here the hero, a certain Thomas Wingfield, is stated to have lived near Bungay in the reign of Elizabeth, and to have been a doctor by trade, having learned his business from another leech in this immediate neighbourhood. After many adventures he dies here a rich man and leaves charities to the poor. Certainly I did think it strange when, subsequent to the writing of the book, I discovered from Mr. Herbert Hartcup, the lawyer, who is a trustee of the Bungay Charities, that a man called Thomas Wingfield did live and die at that exact time, that he *was* a doctor who served his apprenticeship with another local leech, that in some way or other he *did* accumulate wealth of which he bequeathed a portion to the poor that they enjoy to this day, and that his will, which I have since seen, was just such a one as might have been written

by the imaginary Thomas. Almost am I tempted to believe that the true Wingfield must have visited Mexico in the days of Cortés, and that, if one were to dig up his bones, among them would be found the necklace of great emeralds which was given to him by Guatémoc in the hiding-place of Montezuma's treasure.

The last specimen is very simple. While visiting an old church in Suffolk I conceived the idea of my novel, '*Joan Haste*', of which it is unnecessary to set out the plot. After reading it a connection of mine remarked that he had been much interested by the book, though he did not think that the A.-Z.'s, whom he knew well, would altogether appreciate such an accurate report of a passage in their family history whereof they did not often speak. Also he was nervous lest it should be supposed by them that he had told me a story which was communicated to him in confidence. On further investigation it transpired that these A.-Z.'s were buried in the very churchyard where I had imagined my tale, and that their family owned and still own all the land by which it is surrounded.

It needs no great stretch of fancy to believe that in some subtle way the bones beneath the soil of that churchyard had imparted some of their history to my mind while, touched by the place, I stood there evolving the material for another book.

Before I finally leave the subject of romance-writing I should like to say a few words upon a certain point. I have been a good deal attacked because there is much fighting in many of my more imaginative works, which fighting necessarily involves the death of men, the inference being that to write of such things is not desirable. I would ask, Why not? However painful the fact, it remains true that man is a fighting animal, and that from the time of Homer down, and probably

for tens of thousands of years before it, some of his finest qualities—such as patriotism, courage, obedience to authority, patience in disaster, fidelity to friends and a noble cause, endurance, and so forth—have been evolved in the exercise of war, as we need go no further than the pages of the Old Testament to learn. Is it not better to write of hard, clean, honest fighting than, for instance, of treacherous and sickening murder? Will any young man be the worse for the lesson that his hands were given him to defend his head, and, if need be, his country's honour, with that of all who are dear to him? I think not.

It is true that in such a book as '*Nada the Lily*' there is much slaughter. But all this is a matter of history. A tale of the days of Chaka which left out his slayings and battles would be false to the facts and merely ludicrous. Omlets cannot be made without the breaking of eggs. Would such critics then argue that this tale and others like it should be left untold? If so, I hold that they are wrong, since these give a picture which, from the circumstances of my youth, perhaps I alone in the world can paint, not only of some very remarkable men, but of a state of savage society which has now passed away and may never recur.

Further, is there not some hypocrisy in such cavilling in an age when all the great nations of the world are arming themselves to the teeth for that Armageddon which one day must come? And do not some of the very papers in which it appears fill their columns with nauseous and most particular accounts of dreadful and degrading crimes, such as the betrayal and butchery of a defenceless woman, dilating on them from day to day till the reader is sickened? Of which is it the more harmful to read—of a fight between the splendid Zulu

impis, faithful to death ; of old Umslopogaas holding the stair against overpowering odds ; or, let us say, of the dismemberment of a wife or the massacre of little children by some human brute or lunatic ?

Personally I hate war, and all killing, down to the destruction of the lower animals for the sake of sport, has become abominable to me. But while the battle-clouds bank up I do not think that any can be harmed by reading of heroic deeds or of frays in which brave men lose their lives.

What I deem undesirable are the tales of lust, crime, and moral perversion with which the bookstalls are strewn by dozens.

## CHAPTER XVII

### POLITICS AND TOWN LIFE

H. R. H.'s political views—Bred a Tory—Cross-bench mind—Strong Imperialist—Asked to stand for King's Lynn—Declined—Co-director of *African Review*—Undertook later to contest East Norfolk—Difficult constituency for Conservative—Beaten by 198 votes—Stood in the agricultural interest—Specially interested in S African affairs—Cecil Rhodes—Retired from *African Review*—Death of H. R. H.'s father—Elected chairman of local bench—Major Burnham—Some of his adventures—Major Cheyne.

EVER since I came to manhood I have taken an interest in politics, though at first it was the foreign branch of the subject that attracted me most. Like most country squires my father was a Tory to the backbone, and, although one of them broke away, all his sons were brought up in the strictest sect of that somewhat fossilised creed. People generally remain in the political fold wherein they chance to be born, much as they generally remain Protestants or Roman Catholics, or Wesleyans or Unitarians, according to the faith of their fathers. Now I understand that I never was a real Tory—that, in short, as a party man I am the most miserable failure. As a politician I should have been useless from any whip's point of view. He would—well, have struck me off his list as neither hot nor cold, as a dangerous and undesirable individual who, refusing to swallow the shibboleths of his tribe with shut eyes, actually dared to think for himself and to possess that hateful thing, 'a cross-bench mind.'

I believe in conscription. I think it would be the grandest gift that Heaven could give to Britain ; that it would lighten the terrible burden of anxiety which haunts many of us <sup>1</sup> by at least one-half ; that it would make men of tens of thousands among us who are now but loafers without ambition, without prospects, save such as the relief that State or private charity may afford ; that it would inculcate patriotism and the sense of discipline, lacking which every country must in time come to an inglorious end. Indeed my greatest grudge against Mr. Balfour and his colleagues is that they did not take the opportunity given to them during the dark days of the South African War to introduce this reform, which would then, I believe, have been passed without a murmur. Of course I understand that they feared lest a bold step of the sort should tell against them at the polls. How superfluous were their fears was shown by the ultimate disaster to which their do-nothing policy led the party at last. At the best, failure was in front of them ; and it would have been better to fail with something done, if such should prove their fate, leaving a great name behind them which ere long their country would have crowned with the honour it deserved.

These are sentiments which, however much they were disapproved of by the party manager on the hunt for votes, would, if adequately presented, probably provoke a cheer from a Conservative audience. But suppose that I were the speaker on such an occasion, and followed them up by stating that I had grave misgivings as to the authorised programme of Protection, *alias* Tariff Reform ? Suppose I pointed out that in my view, which is possibly quite erroneous, duties on food-stuffs are scarcely practicable in this

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1912.

land of city dwellers, who not unnaturally object to paying more for the necessaries of life, as, however moderate those duties might be, the British middleman would be careful to see they did ? Suppose, further, that I showed what I take to be an unanswerable fact, that any scheme of Tariff Reform which omitted duties on food-stuffs would result in the final ruin of British agriculture, and in the consequent progressive deterioration of the race, what would the Conservative Party say then ? That they had no use for *me*, I imagine !

In the same way, what place is there in politics for a man like myself who has the most earnest sympathies with the poor and who desires to advance their lot in every reasonable way, but who loathes and detests the Radical method of attempting to set class against class, and of aiming all their artillery at the middle section of society—the real prop of the race—for the reason that it is Conservative in its instincts and votes against them at the polls ? Again, what would be thought of one who, posing as a member of the Tory party, yet earnestly advocated the division of the land amongst about ten times as many as hold it at present, thereby spoiling a great many great estates, and often enough interfering with the interests and pleasures of those who shoot and hunt, or who seek this road to social success ? Assuredly for such a one there is no standing-room upon any of our political platforms. ‘ Away with him ! ’ would be the cry. Therefore he must be content to remain outside, doing whatever work may come to his hand which he conceives to be clean and, in however humble a measure, useful. It is hard to be an out-and-out party politician and yet remain honest—or at least some of us find it so, though the consciences of others are more accommodating.

Perhaps, however, this saying is not true in every sense, since some minds cannot consider a subject in all its aspects ; to them light has but a single colour. What they want to believe, that they believe.

Such are the views to which I have attained at my present age. Five-and-twenty years ago, even fifteen years ago, they were different. For then I still smarted from the whip of Mr. Gladstone's Colonial policy, and had less practical experience of social questions than I have to-day. The great wrongs which Radicals were capable of working upon loyal Englishmen to serve their party interests dominated my mind. In short, Mr. Gladstone turned one who in all essentials would have been a moderate Liberal into an Imperialist who made the mistake, that is common to those who 'think in continents,' of underrating the needs and circumstances of the Home Country. The Empire is very large and England is very small. So is the heart small in proportion to a great body, but after all it is an important organ, and if it becomes diseased or stops—what happens to the body ? Even to-day, when the Colonies are more powerful than they were a score of years ago, they would find this question awkward to answer, since there are peoples who, in such an event as the stoppage of our national heart, might be anxious to possess themselves of a limb or two of that weakened or paralysed body. Indeed, as we see by many signs, this is a fact whereof the Dominions have become painfully aware in these latter days. Realising that an empire cannot be kept together merely by taxing the Mother Country's goods and affording homes for such of her surplus population as it suits them to receive, they now show themselves eager to adopt a scheme of Imperial Preference and to bear some share of the cost of her armaments. There they are surely

wise, since if England falls, say within the next fifty years, then—God help these half-empty lands, one of which at least has been reduced to the strange expedient of offering a money bonus for every child born within its coasts !

In the future, however, all this may change ; it is even possible that they may become the protectors of the worn-out and decrepit parent from which they sprang. *Absit omen !*

My first chance of entering Parliament occurred in 1893, when, in consequence of some speeches that I had made and certain letters I had written in the papers, I was asked if I would contest King's Lynn. I declined because of the expense and the difficulty of getting backwards and forwards between my home and the borough, since this was before the day of motors. Herein I was foolish, that is if I wished to enter politics, since I think I could have won that seat easily enough, and it would have been much less costly to fight and hold than is a county constituency.

A couple of years later the question arose again. By this time, as I have explained, I was utterly weary of a retired life and of the writing of books, from which I sought eagerly for some avenue of escape.

My letters in *The Times* on matters connected with South Africa had attracted some notice, and as a result I was again brought into contact with those interested in the affairs of that country. Ultimately I was elected Chairman of the Anglo-African Writers' Club, a pleasant and useful dining society that is now defunct. Also I became co-director of a weekly paper called the *African Review*, which some years ago was absorbed by another journal. It was a very good paper of its sort—too good for the market to which it appealed—and run on the most straightforward lines. The end

of these activities was that, greatly daring, I entered into a partnership with my fellow-director, who was a financier in the African market, with whom it was understood that I should stand for Parliament, with the general idea of giving my attention to African affairs in the House of Commons.

Mercifully the thing miscarried, for had it been otherwise I might have had to bear upon my shoulders much of the burden of the Parliamentary defence of the inspirers and perpetrators of the Jameson Raid, which would have been neither a pleasant nor an easy task.

The constituency which I was weak enough to undertake to contest was, and still remains, one of the most difficult in the kingdom from the Conservative point of view—namely, East Norfolk. In the old days before the lowering of the franchise it was represented by the late Sir Edward Birkbeck, who, however, after that event was defeated by a majority of 440 by Mr. (now Sir R. J.) Price, a gentleman unconnected with the county. Seeing the hopelessness of winning the seat, Sir Edward Birkbeck made no further attempt in that direction, and the late Colonel MacCalmont was invited to take his place. He came, he saw, and he retired, like a wise man, leaving me to fill his shoes.

I may as well state the result at once. I reduced the adverse majority to 198. Since that time sundry other Unionists have fought the place, with the result that on each occasion it has risen. I believe that at the last election it reached the grand total of somewhere about 1200.

My programme was Unionist and Agricultural. I quote a few lines from the speech which I made when I was selected as the Conservative candidate, as it puts my position in a nutshell.

These are the measures that I would suggest as a means towards that remedial legislation to which you are entitled. First I am of opinion that the £60,000 per annum at present raised by Land-tax in this country should be kept at home and should go to the relief of the Poor-rate in the districts in which it is collected. Secondly I would advocate that foreign barley coming into this country, unless it be crushed barley to be used as food for cattle, should be subjected to an import duty. Such a duty could in no way raise the price of food-stuffs, for men do not eat barley, and even when it was at nearly double its present cost, the price of beer was very much what it is to-day. But I do not suggest that the millions of money to be raised by such a tax should go into the pockets of the landlords. I suggest that it should go into the pockets of the people ; I suggest that every farthing of it should be devoted to a most truly democratic end, to the end of an Old Age Pension Scheme. This, I think, might be worked through the aid of the present Friendly Societies. I think that through this means the State might be able to put down an extra shilling for every shilling that has been saved by individual industry and invested with those Societies, and might thereby save many a deserving man from penury and the workhouse whose only crime against society is that he has grown old and feeble in its service. I suggest again that a bill should be passed to relieve pure beer of a proportion of the taxation upon it, and to impose that proportion of taxation so remitted on impure beer—that is, beer made of other materials than malt and hops. I propose again that foreign flour should be taxed. In saying this I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not wish to see an impost put upon food-stuffs —let the corn come in free by all means, I say, but do not let it come in free in a manufactured condition. Why should not our millers have the benefit of the grinding of that corn ? Why should not our farmers have the benefit of the offal and other products ?

I think that is enough to quote, for, oh ! what dreary things are old political speeches. Not for five shillings would I read through all the columns of

this one of mine that once upon a time seemed to me about the most important thing in the whole world !

I hope, however, that the reader will note the allusion to Old Age Pensions. Now these have come about, but on easier terms than I suggested. The Protective part of my policy was moderate enough and, I think, would have been useful. But it did me more harm than good, since what I had said was of course distorted in the usual fashion.

The fight raged for some months and was very severely contested, especially during the last six weeks or so after the Government had gone out, which I spent on board a wherry cruising from part to part of that wide and awkward constituency. I believe there are persons who take to wherrying as a pastime, but so unpleasant are my associations with that form of locomotion that never would I again willingly set foot upon one of those lumbering boats. Sometimes I had to address three meetings a day, and always there was one or more, besides innumerable visits and much letter-writing. My old friend Arthur Cochrane was my companion in this adventure, as in many others, and nobly did he work.

The burden of the meetings and, still worse, of the smoking concerts fell mostly on us two, for, a General Election being in progress, but little help was forthcoming from outside. I would speak for half an hour or forty minutes to an audience mainly composed of agricultural labourers, some of whom—they were nearly all partisans of the other side—were wont to express their active dislike of me and my opinions by making hideous noises resembling those of the lower animals in pain. One man used to follow me about and ‘ baa ’ like a sheep in the front row. He only stopped when

Cochrane began his comic songs, which I suppose appealed to such intelligence as he possessed.

I think these comic songs were the most popular part of the proceedings. Also they were necessary, as my opponent was a master of this form of entertainment and was said to owe much of his popularity to a ditty called 'The Baby on the Shore.' Alas ! in this matter I could not hope to compete with him. When the meeting was over my wife and I, with Cochrane and some other ladies, used to emerge and face the booing without, which sometimes was accompanied by hustling and stone-throwing.

The odd thing is that, but for an accident, or rather a piece of carelessness, I should, I believe, have won after all. When I was making my tour of the constituency on the day of the election I called in at the head office at Yarmouth and chanced to notice a huge pile of letters which stood as high as the writing-desk in the room—there must have been several hundreds of them. I asked the agent what they were. He replied with some hesitation that they were polling-cards returned by the Dead Letter Office marked 'Not known.' It seemed that the addresses of the out-voters had not been checked for years, and therefore these persons, of whom practically every one, as owners of property and Conservatives, would have voted for me, had never received my polling-card and, consequently, did not put in an appearance. Moreover, there were individuals in the constituency itself who did not receive their polling-cards, while other out-voters who did receive them were sent to the wrong polling-places, and arrived there too late to reach the stations at which their votes could be legally recorded. I remember a piteous letter from a gentleman who had travelled all the way from Cornwall, reaching Norwich

somewhere about 7 P.M., only to discover that he must vote at Yarmouth within an hour, which of course he was unable to do. When one considers how comparatively small was the number of votes necessary to turn the scale in my favour, it is easy to understand what this blundering meant to me. Still, for reasons that I have already given, I do honestly believe that all was for the best.

Although I might have done so more than once, never again have I stood for Parliament. To tell the truth, the whole business disgusts me with its atmosphere of falsehood, or at the least of prevarication, and its humiliating quest of support. In such struggles in Britain there is, it is true, little actual corruption, but of indirect corruption there is still a great deal. From the moment a candidate appears on the field he is fair game, and every man's hand is in his pocket. Demands for 'your patronage and support' fall on him, thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. I remember that I was even pestered to supply voters with wooden legs ! Why should an election in a county division cost, as this one did, something over £2000 in all ?

Some years before this time my brother Alfred conceived the plan of obtaining some great concession of land and minerals from Lobengula. He was, I recollect, angry with me because I would not enter into his scheme with enthusiasm, and I think has never quite forgiven me my backwardness. But I knew a good deal about the Matabele ; also I held that Lobengula would never grant him what he wanted unless it was wrung from him by force of arms. Indeed I am convinced to this day that no one except Cecil Rhodes, with his vast command of money, could have dispossessed this tyrant and annexed those great territories.

I did not know Cecil Rhodes in Africa, where we never crossed each other's paths ; indeed I think he arrived there only towards the end of my time. We first met in London, I believe somewhere about the year 1888, when I was asked to meet him at the National Liberal Club. At that time he was little known ; I do not think that I had ever heard of him before. He impressed me a good deal, and I remember his explaining to me in great detail the provisions of a measure he was introducing into the Cape Parliament—I think it was the Glen Grey Act—in such detail, indeed, that I lost the thread of the thing and grew bewildered. Rhodes could rarely be persuaded to write a letter, but my recollection is that he could talk at a great pace when he was in the mood.

When he was in England, just before the Jameson Raid, I saw Rhodes several times, for it was then that the African people were anxious that I should stand for Parliament. I remember going to breakfast with him at the Burlington Hotel. He was then at the height of his success, and the scene was very curious. Already before breakfast a number of people, some of them well known, who were not asked to that meal, were waiting about in ante-rooms on the chance of getting a word with or a favour from the great man. It reminded me of a picture I have seen of Dr. Johnson and others hanging about in the vestibule of, I think, Lord Chesterfield's apartment for a like object. There was the same air of patient expectancy upon their faces. In a china bowl on a table I observed a great accumulation of unopened letters, most of which had a kind of society look about them ; probably they were invitations and so forth. It was, I have understood, one of the habits of the Rhodes entourage not to trouble to open letters that came by post.

Unless these were of known importance they only attended to those that were sent by hand, or to telegrams, and the replies were generally verbal or telegraphic. Perhaps this was owing to press of business, or perhaps to a pose, or to a combination of both.

The last time that I ever saw Rhodes must have been about a year later, probably when he was in England after the Jameson Raid affair. I went to call on him on some matter—I entirely forget what it was—at the Burlington Hotel, and found him alone. We talked for a long while, though again I forgot the subject of our conversation. What I remember is the appearance of the man as he paced restlessly up and down the long room like a lion in a cage, throwing out his words in jerky, isolated sentences, and in a curious high voice that sometimes almost attained to a falsetto. He gave me the idea of being in a very nervous state, as I dare say was the case.

His was one of those big, mixed natures of which it is extremely difficult to form a just opinion. My own, for what it is worth, is that he loved his country and desired above all things to advance her interests ; also that he was personally very ambitious. He set great ends before himself and went to work to attain them at any cost. To begin with, he saw that money was necessary, so he rubbed shoulders with speculators, with Jews, with anybody who was useful, and by means of this deal or that deal made the money, not for its own sake, but that he might use it to fulfil the purposes of his busy and far-reaching brain. He outwitted Kruger ; he destroyed the Matabele ; he seized the vast territories of Rhodesia, and persuaded the British public to find him the gold wherewith to finance them, most of which the British public has, I imagine, lost. But the Empire has gained, for Rhodesia does not

run away, like the capital, in over-financed and unremunerative companies. One day it may be a great asset of the Crown, if the Imperial possessions hold together.

It would almost seem as though Rhodes was one of those men who have been and still are raised up by that Power, of the existence of which he seems to have been dubious, to fulfil certain designs of Its own. There have been a good many with somewhat similar characteristics. Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Chaka, come to my mind as I write. Roosevelt, though his is a finer mind, may or may not prove another : at the moment it rather looks as though his cards were played ; but who knows ?

Had it not been for Rhodes I incline to the belief that the Germans would have taken Rhodesia, perhaps after a preliminary occupation by the Boers. That danger, I think, was present to his thoughts and was one of the reasons which induced him to strike, and strike hard, caring nothing for the blood that splashed up from the blow. In the same way he wished to seize the Transvaal by a *coup de main*, or rather a *coup d'épée*, but here he miscalculated the strength of the opposing forces. Or perhaps, as he himself said, Jameson—whom I also knew and who possesses, I think, in some ways a higher nature than did Rhodes—upset his ‘apple-cart.’ At least, whatever his faults, he was a great figure in his generation, and his name must always be remembered if only by that of the vast territory he seized, which he still surveys from his tomb-eyrie on the Matoppos.

Rhodes had his weaknesses, like other men. A few years ago I was staying with Lord Carrington, now the Marquis of Lincolnshire. He told me a little story with reference to Rhodes’ declaration, which Lord

Carrington said he had often made, to the effect that he would accept no title or favour from Royalty. They were both of them commanded to Windsor at the same time, and Lord Carrington gave me a lively description of the intense amusement of the company when the late Queen came down to dinner and in a very marked manner asked one of the gentlemen-in-waiting whether he had been careful to see that the '*Right Honourable* gentleman,' pointing to Cecil Rhodes, had been made comfortable in every way, thereby indicating the conferring of a Privy Councillorship upon him, which he had *not* refused.

My City labours endured but for nine months, after which time I was delivered. During those tumultuous days I toiled in a fine office in London, where thousands were talked of as of no account. It was the period of the great African boom, and the business machine hummed merrily. We made money, I remember ; also we lost money. But it was all much too speculative and nerve-racking for me, while the burden of those companies weighed upon my mind heavily. The true-bred City man cares little for such things, which to him are all part of the day's work, as writing a chapter of a book might be to me. He is accustomed to take risks, and an adept at getting out of difficult situations.

At last came a time in my own instance when my partner, an excellent and very able gentleman in his own way and one for whom I retain the most friendly feelings, announced that he meant to depart to South Africa for a year or so, leaving me to conduct all the extremely intricate affairs with which he was connected. This was too much for me, and then and there I had the presence of mind to strike.

All men make mistakes, but afterwards, so far as

my observation goes, they may be divided into two classes : those who know when to get out of them, and those who do not.

Well, in this case I had sufficient sense and courage to appreciate my mistake and to retire while there was yet time. Of course there was some difficulty, as under the deed of partnership I was bound for a period. But, when he saw that I was determined to go, my partner behaved very well and kindly signed a dissolution.

I should add that the period which this chapter covers was marked by several events that were more or less important to me. In 1893 my dear father died as the result of a chill which he caught in waiting about for the poll to be declared at an election in cold weather. It was sad to see a man of his great strength and energy fading away and becoming so subdued and gentle, qualities which were not natural to him. After one extraordinary recovery from the jaundice, or whatever it was that had attacked him, believing himself to be strong again, he began to travel and pay visits in winter, and thus brought on a return of his ailment. I was not actually present at his death-bed, as I could only reach Bradenham on the following day. He left me one of his executors and, as he was dying, told our old servant Hocking to give me his watch and chain, which I think had been his father's before him. I have it now, still marking the hour at which it ran down under his pillow on that night. His last words, spoken almost as he expired, were :

‘ God is everywhere ! He is in this room, is He not ? ’

He looked fine and peaceful in death ; as I think I have said, he was very handsome, and in many ways a remarkable man. I never knew anyone who resembled



HENRY MORTON STANLEY

Nov. 3, 1880



him in the least or who was the possessor of half his energy. God rest him !

Sir Theophilus Shepstone died in the same year, and, I think, at almost exactly the same age. I mourned my old chief very sincerely.

In 1893 or the previous year I was elected Chairman of my local bench of magistrates, an office which I have filled ever since. Indeed, when I wished to resign it the other day, on my appointment to the Dominions Royal Commission, that, all being well, will necessitate long absences from England during which I shall be unable to attend to the business of the bench, my colleagues unanimously requested me to retain the position and appointed my old friend and neighbour, Captain Meade of Earsham Hall, to act for me when I was away. I was touched at this evidence of their regard and confidence.

In 1895 the Committee did me the honour to elect me to the Athenæum Club under Rule 2, and in the following year I was chosen Chairman of Committee of the Society of Authors, a post which I held till 1898.

About this time I made the acquaintance of one of the most interesting of all my friends, Major F. R. Burnham, D.S.O., concerning whom and whose career I should like to say a few words. Burnham is an American, born among the Indians on the frontiers of Minnesota in 1861, and one of the best specimens of that great people whom I have ever met. Indeed, taking him altogether, I am not sure that when the circumstances of his upbringing and life are considered, he is not the most remarkable man whom it has been my privilege to know. He belongs to the seventh generation of pioneers, as his family went to America from England in 1635.

In personal appearance he is small and quiet-

mannered, with steady, grey-blue eyes that have in them a far-away look such as those acquire whose occupation has caused them to watch continually at sea or on great plains. He does not smoke, fearing, as he told me, lest it should injure the acuteness of his sense of smell, and he drinks less liquid perhaps than anyone else. One wineglass of water, or perhaps claret, is the amount he will consume during a long meal. He has trained himself to this abstinence in order that, when scouting or travelling where there is no water, he may still be able to exist, with the result that on one occasion at least he survived when all or nearly all his companions died, I think in the deserts of Arizona. He is not at all communicative ; indeed I remember his telling me that I was one of the very few people to whom he had imparted any information concerning his many adventures.

When he was in England Charles Longman was very anxious that he should write his Life, but although he offered him a handsome sum on account and, to my knowledge, Burnham at the time was not too well supplied with money, in spite of my entreaties and offers of assistance, this, to my lasting regret, he absolutely refused to do. Therefore, if he still lives, as I believe to be the case—although somewhat to my surprise I have heard nothing from him for the last three or four years—when he dies the record of all his extraordinary adventures, of which he has experienced more in fact than Allan Quatermain himself in fiction, will, I fear, perish with him. Of those adventures, of course, I can only repeat a few specimens from memory, as he has told them to me walking about the land or sitting together over the fire in this house.

His first recollection is of being carried away by his mother when the savage Indians attacked the place

where they lived, somewhere on the Mexican border. He was then about three years old, and at last his mother, unable to bear him any farther, hid him in a shock of maize, telling him that he must keep quite silent. From between the stalks of the maize presently he saw the pursuing Indians pass. Next day his mother returned and rescued him.

Later on, as a married man, he found his way with some members of his family to Rhodesia, attracted by the magic name of Cecil Rhodes, and took part in the settlement of that colony. Prospecting and the management of mines were their occupations. Here his little girl was born, the first white child that saw the light in Buluwayo. He named her Nada after the heroine of my Zulu tale. Poor infant, she did not live long, as the following dedication to one of my stories shows :

To the Memory of the Child

NADA BURNHAM

who ' bound all to her ' and, while her father cut his way through the hordes of the Ingubu Regiment, perished of the hardships of war at Buluwayo on May 22nd, 1896, I dedicate this tale of Faith triumphant over savagery and death.

Burnham was with Wilson when he was wiped out on the banks of the Shangani, together with all his companions, except Burnham himself and his brother-in-law, Ingram, who had been sent back to try to bring help from the column. All that tale I have told in the ' Red True Story Book ' (Longmans), so I need not repeat it here. I shall never forget Burnham's account of how he tracked the missing men in the darkness, by feeling the spoor with his fingers and by smell, or of how, still in the darkness, he counted the

Matabele impi as they passed him close enough to touch them.

Subsequently Burnham took service as a scout under our flag in the Boer War. Indeed I believe that Lord Roberts cabled to him in the Klondike. Here many things befell him. Thus he was out scouting from Headquarters at the time of the Sannah's Post affair, saw the Boers post their ambuscade, saw the British walking into the trap. He rode to a hill and, with a large red pocket-handkerchief which he always carried, tried to signal to them to keep back. But nobody would take the slightest notice of his signals. Even the Boers were puzzled by so barefaced a performance, and for quite a long while did not interfere with him. So the catastrophe occurred—because it was nobody's business to take notice of Burnham's signals! Ultimately some Boers rode out and made him a prisoner. They led him to a stone-walled cattle kraal where a number of them were ensconced, whence he saw everything.

When the British were snared a Boer lad took some sighting shots at them, and at length said laconically, 'Sechzen hondert!' whercon the Boers sighted their rifles to that range and began to use them with deadly effect. A whole battery of English guns opened fire upon this kraal. The air screamed with shells. Some fell short and exploded against the wall; some went high, some hit upon the top of the wall. The net result of that terrific bombardment was—one horse blown to bits. The practice was not bad, but those behind the wall remained quite comfortable.

When everything was over Burnham was taken off as a prisoner. A change of guard enabled him to pretend a wound, so he was placed on an ox-waggon. He sat on the fore-part of the waggon, and just before

day the guards nodding in their saddles gave him the chance to drop down between the wheels, letting the wagon trek away over him. Then he rolled himself into a little gully near the road, and, as he dared not stand up, lay cooking there during the whole of the following day with the fierce sun beating on his back. When night came again he walked back to the English camp, a distance of nearly a hundred miles, and reported himself.

This exploit was equalled, if not surpassed, by one of my sons-in-law, Major Reginald Cheyne of the Indian Army. He was posted on a ridge with a few men in one of the affairs of this war when an overwhelming force of Boers opened fire on them. He held out until all but two of those with him were dead or wounded and the ammunition—even of the wounded—exhausted. Then, having been shot through the face behind the nose, in another part of the head, and also cut by a bullet all along the forehead, which caused the blood to flow down into his eyes and blind him, he surrendered. He was taken prisoner, and in this dreadful state carried off in a waggon. At night he pretended that it was necessary for him to retire. The Boer guard showed him his revolver, which he tapped significantly. Cheyne nodded and, taking his risks, made a bolt for it. In due course he, too, staggered into the British camp, where he recovered. I hope I have the details right, but Cheyne, like Burnham, is not given to talking of such things. It was only after much urging on the part of my daughter that he told me the story, of which I had heard rumours from a brother officer, who spoke of him as ‘a hero.’ He was recommended, together with his Colonel, for a V.C. or a D.S.O.—I forget which—but, unfortunately for him, the Boers captured and burnt the despatch, so that

nothing was known at home of his services until too late. However, they made him a brevet-major. Such are the fortunes of war.

After Pretoria was occupied Burnham was sent out to cut the railway line by which the Boers were retreating. He exploded part of his gun-cotton and destroyed the line, and then rode over a ridge—straight into a Boer bivouac! He turned his horse and, lying flat on the saddle, galloped off under a heavy fire. He thought he was safe, but the Boers had got his range against the skyline—it was night—and suddenly he remembered no more. When he came to himself the sun was shining, and he lay alone upon the veld. The horse was gone, where to he never learned. He felt himself all over and found that he had no wound, also that he was injured internally, probably owing to the horse falling on him when it was struck by a bullet. Near by was a little cattle or goat kraal, into which he crept and lay down. From this kraal he saw the Boers come and mend the line. When night fell again he crawled upon his hands and knees—he could not walk—down to the line and destroyed it afresh, for his gun-cotton cartridges remained in a bag upon his shoulders. I am not certain whether he did this once or twice. At any rate in the end, feeling that he was a dead man if he remained where he was, he tore up the bag, tied the sacking round his wrists and knees, and, thus protected against the stones and grass stumps, dragged himself out into the veld, where, by the mercy of Providence, an English patrol found him. It turned out that his stomach had been ruptured, and that, had it not been for his long abstinence from food, he must have expired. No treatment could possibly have been better for him, and as it was the break in the tissues found time to heal. In the end he recovered, though that was the last service

which he did in South Africa. It was rewarded with a D.S.O. and the rank of major in the British Army. Lord Roberts gave him a remarkable letter of thanks and appreciation : it sets forth his admiration of Burnham's skill, endurance and ability in difficult scouting inside the lines of the enemy.

Burnham told me that during that war on many occasions he passed through the sentries of both the British and the Boer forces without being seen. Once he penetrated into a Boer camp and came to a waggon where a fat old Dutchman lay snoring. To the trek-tow were tied sixteen beautiful black oxen, no doubt that Dutchman's especial pride. With his knife he cut them loose and drove them away back into the British lines. Often, he told me, he had speculated as to what the old Boer said when he woke up and found them gone for ever. On another occasion when he was scouting he was absolutely surrounded by the Boers and could find no cover in which to hide. With the help of an old Kaffir blanket and a stick he made himself up as a beggar and limped away between them without even being questioned.

In all such matters he seems to possess a kind of sixth sense, evolved no doubt in the course of his long training in Indian warfare. He was one of the pioneers in the Klondike, whither he travelled across the winter snows on a sledge drawn by dogs, which for some weeks were his sole companions. These dogs he watched very closely, and as a result of his observations informed me that he was sure from their conduct at night that they possessed some elementary instinct of prayer. His reasons are too long to set out, but they were very striking.

In Rhodesia he discovered a large amount of treasure buried in one of the prehistoric ruins and old

forts, with the skeletons of unknown ancients. I have a gold bead from it which he gave me, mounted as a pin ; also some iron arrow-heads which he found amidst the bones, showing that these men died in an attack by enemies.

Such are a few of the incidents of Major Burnham's career. The reader might judge from them that he is a rough and uncultured man, but this is far from being the case. Like old Allan Quatermain, he is an extremely polished and thoughtful person, and one with an extraordinarily wide outlook on affairs in general. I remember, for instance, that he took a most lively interest in parish councils, their constitution and business. This, after all the vast issues of life and death in which he had been engaged for many years, struck me as strange—though, as we know, elephants are adepts at the picking up of pins.

When I was Commissioner in America in 1905 I stayed with the Burnhams at their charming house in Pasadena, Los Angeles. After I parted from them I travelled with another remarkable man, Mr. Hays Hammond—who was once condemned to death with Jameson at Pretoria—across America in his private car, and spoke with him of Burnham. Also I told him the strange tale of a certain odd gentleman of the name of Carmichael, now I believe long dead, who thought that he had discovered the secret of the hidden city of the Aztecs, that lies somewhere at the back of Chiapas, in which treasure to the value of three million sterling is supposed to have been concealed by Montezuma on the approach of the Spaniards.<sup>1</sup> Thinking, from the documentary evidence, that there was

<sup>1</sup> This was the sacred treasure held by Montezuma as High Priest, which it took 1500 men to carry in bars of gold. It must not be mixed up with the private royal treasure whereof I have already spoken, that was buried by Guatemoc—also to save it from the Spaniards.—H.R.H.

something in this tale, a friend and I furnished Carmichael with a moderate sum of money to enable him to locate the place. He set out, and after incredible hardships found the wrong city, or the wrong part of the right city, where his Indian carriers deserted him, leaving him suffering from fever to support life upon catfish, which he caught with a bent nail. Ultimately he was rescued and brought back to civilisation.

Hays Hammond was so taken with this exciting narrative that he determined to send Burnham to look for the Aztec city, and telegraphed to him to come from San Francisco to New York to see him. Needless to say, Burnham was quite ready for the adventure, and followed me to England to get particulars, among other business. Whilst here a terrible thing befell him. He had taken a little villa on the Thames, where he was living with his wife and a fine little boy, the brother of the child Nada. One day the boy was missing. His body was found in the Thames. I was informed that when Burnham saw it he fell to the ground senseless as though he had been shot.

Afterwards he returned to America and started to look for the Aztec city, but was prevented from getting very far by a rebellion among the Indians. His last letter to me was written from that district some four years ago. I answered it, but since then have heard nothing from him. I do not think that he is dead, as such news would probably have reached me one way or another, or Hays Hammond would have mentioned it when I had a hurried interview with him at the time of the King's Coronation, which he attended as Special Ambassador from the United States. I conclude, therefore, that Burnham is probably now engaged in all the Mexican fighting that has ensued upon the deposition of President Diaz, which leaves him no time

for correspondence ; or perhaps he is disinterring the treasure from the hidden city ! One day I hope that he will appear again and greet me in his quiet fashion as though we had parted but yesterday—I mean, of course, on *this* bank of the great ' Divide.'

## CHAPTER XVIII

### RURAL ENGLAND

II. R. H. returns to the country—Devotes himself to agriculture—'Farmer's Year'—Arthur Young—Bradfield Combust—Bobbin—Determines to follow Arthur Young's example—Agreed with *Daily Express* for series of articles on Rural England—Visit to Cyprus and Holy Land—A Winter Pilgrimage—Rural England journeys—Heaviest labour of H. R. H.'s life—Arthur Cochrane's help—Hundreds of interviews—Practical results disappointing—Mr. R. W. Hanbury—*Agricultural Post*—Lord Onslow—Mrs. Asquith.

My town excitements over I returned to the country and the writing of books. Oddly enough, I found that the thorough change of thought seemed to have rested my mind, with the result that my imagination was fresher than it had been for some years before. Also the work itself was and has remained less irksome to me than during the years 1891 to 1895. Still the desire haunted me to do something in my day more practical than the mere invention of romance upon romance. By degrees it came home to me that a great subject lay to my hand, that of the state of English agriculture and of our rural population, also of all the questions thereto pertaining.

So forcefully did it come home that I grew to think and indeed to believe that I was appointed to serve my own, and perhaps other countries, by following up this neglected branch of research which to many has seemed so useless and so dull. Therefore with a bold heart I gave all my spare time and energy to a study of the matter.

First I wrote the book that is called 'A Farmer's Year,' with the twofold purpose of setting down the struggles of those who were engaged in agriculture during that trying time, and of preserving for the benefit of future generations, if these should care to read of them, a record of the circumstances of their lives and of the condition of their industry in England in the year 1898. In its way this book, which was first published serially in *Longman's Magazine*—now, alas! defunct, like most of the good magazines of my early days—proved extraordinarily successful. It was reviewed and quoted everywhere, almost without exception, with great favour. Also the letters that poured in upon me concerning it were almost without number; they still continue to arrive. But, compared with my romances, it brought me in but a small amount of money. For this there were several reasons. It was published at too low a price—7s. 6d.—whereby Charles Longman and I hoped to put it within the reach of all; also the charming illustrations by my friend Mr. Leon Little, of which I have the originals in this house, involved a good deal of expenditure.

The chief reason, however, is very simple. The British public as a whole is a nation of town dwellers and not rural in its tastes. It wants novels to read, not works that deal with agriculture in however interesting a fashion. He who treats of such subjects must do so at his own cost and be content to take his pay in honour and glory. Well, as I never expected anything else, I was not disappointed at this lack of financial results. My objects were, as I have said, quite different. I set them out so clearly in the little preface which I wrote some years later for the 'Silver Library' Edition of the work, that I will venture to quote it here :

In Ancient Egypt the gentlemen farmers of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties whilst yet alive caused their future sepulchres to be adorned with representations of such scenes of daily life and husbandry as to them were most pleasant and familiar.

The study of these paintings and reliefs has delighted me much to-day, as it did when first I visited them in 1887. Whilst considering them it occurred to me that in this book, by means of the methods of my own age, I have unconsciously attempted to follow the example of the authors of these rock-hewn manuscripts who lived some fifty centuries ago.

Perhaps, I thought to myself, in times to be, when all is changed again save the eternal ways of Nature that are the ways of God, the word-pictures of my pages also may thus interest and instruct unborn men of tastes akin to mine.

Such is my hope.

It would please me to write another 'Farmer's Year' arranged upon a similar plan, setting forth my further agricultural experiences throughout an entire year, now that I farm on a larger scale and more scientifically than I did, especially in the matter of milk-production. I greatly doubt, however, whether at my age and with so much work in front of me, I shall ever find the opportunity, especially as the production of such a book involves constant residence on one spot from January to December.

I followed up 'A Farmer's Year' by reading a paper on the Rural Exodus before the Norfolk Chamber of Agriculture on May 6, 1899, which is printed at the end of that volume, and moving the following Resolution that, after discussion, was carried unanimously :

This Chamber respectfully calls the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the continued and progressive shrinkage of the rural population in the Eastern Counties, and especially of those adult members of it who are described as skilled agricultural labourers.

In view of the grave and obvious national consequences

which must result if this exodus continues, the Chamber prays that Her Majesty's Government will as soon as may be convenient make its causes the subject of Parliamentary inquiry and report with a view to their mitigation or removal.

On May 30th in the same year I moved a similar Resolution before the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture in London where, after criticism and discussion, it was also unanimously carried.

In January 1900 I went with my family to Florence, where we stayed with my sister-in-law, Mrs. John Haggard, whose husband was at that time Consul in Noumea, whither he could not take his children. It was the year of the Boer War, and a melancholy business I found it to spell out the tale of our disasters in the Italian papers. *The Times* had asked me if I would care to go to South Africa as one of their war correspondents, but this did not strike me as an attractive business at my age. However, I entered into another arrangement with Mr. Arthur Pearson, the owner of the group of papers of which the *Daily Express* is the principal. This was that, on the conclusion of the war, I should write a series of articles under the title of 'The New South Africa,' which would, of course, have involved a long journey in that country. This engagement was never fulfilled, for the reason that the war dragged on for another two years or so, before which time the British public was utterly weary of the subject of South Africa. Upon this ground Pearson suggested that the contract should be cancelled.

In the meantime, however, while I was taking my bath one morning—a domestic occasion on which, for some reason unexplained, I have observed that I am more open to new impressions than at any other time—an idea struck me. It was to the effect that I should

like to emulate Arthur Young, who more than a century before had travelled through and written of the state of agriculture in the majority of the English counties. Second thoughts showed me that the enterprise was very vast. It had taken Arthur Young about thirty years, if I remember right, not to complete it—for this neither he nor any one else ever did—but to deal with about twenty-six counties, travelling leisurely on horseback and for the most part, I think, as an official of what in those days answered to the present Board of Agriculture.

I may add that about a year ago I paid a visit to Arthur Young's home, Bradfield Combust, more commonly called Burnt Bradfield, near Bury St. Edmunds, which was then for sale. The house, of course, is rebuilt, but all the rest—park, ancient oaks, and little lake—remain much as they were in his day, a hundred years ago.

Readers of his Life will remember how he instructed his delicate daughter—who afterwards died, poor child—to walk in certain places, such as in the Round Garden or on the flagged path where it was dry—‘the little garden where I have so many times seen her happy.’

There they are to this day, and, standing among them alone, I could almost re-create the figure of pale little Bobbin as she obeyed the orders sent from France in her father's letters. There, too, is the great avenue of limes which were, I believe, planted by Mr. Arthur Young, running from the house across the timbered grounds to the highway by the church. Here in the churchyard lie the mortal remains of this great man, for, when his prescience and his patient industry are taken into account, I think he may fairly be described as great. In the church, actually underneath his pew,

is buried his sweet Bobbin, and on a tablet in an annexe appears a touching memorial inscription to her, which I regret I had no time to copy. It does not, I think, appear in the Life by Miss Betham Edwards.

How sadly read his words written at Bradfield in the year 1800 :

I never come to this place without reaping all the pleasure which any place can give me now. It is beautiful and healthy, and is endeared to me by so many recollections, melancholy ones now, alas ! that I feel more here than anywhere else. Here have I lived from my infancy, here my dear mother breathed her last, here was all I knew of a sister, and the church contains the remains of my father, mother, and ever beloved child ! Here, under my window, her little garden—the shrubs and flowers she planted—the willow on the island, her room, her books, her papers. There have I prayed to the Almighty that I might join her in the next world.

Well, his sorrows are done and, had she lived the full life of woman, by now Bobbin's days would have been counted out twice over. Let us trust that long ago her broken-hearted father's petition has been granted, and that this pathetic pair once more walk hand in hand in some celestial garden, never to be parted more.

If I may venture to compare myself with such a man, there is a considerable similarity between our aims and circumstances. We have both been animated by an overwhelming sense of the vital importance of British agriculture to this country and its citizens. We were both East Anglians and born of the class of landed gentry or 'squires.' We have both been official servants of the State. We have both written novels and much connected with the land. We were both practical farmers, which many who write on such things are not, and in the same counties. We were both

tall, thin, with pronounced features, and possessed a nervous temperament and somewhat similar powers of observation. We both suffered a terrible loss that saddened our lives, though happily for him the blow fell in his later days. Both of us have been animated by the same hopes.

Such are some of the resemblances, and I dare say others could be found ; for instance, if Young wrote of rural France, I have written of rural Denmark. Only I am thankful to say I have been spared his domestic separations, as I hope I shall be spared his blindness and the religious mania, or something approaching it, that darkened his last years.

To return, in the end I determined to cling to my inspiration and to follow old Arthur Young's example, if in any way I could manage so to do.

My chance came in connection with this South African agreement. In answer to Pearson's suggestion that it should be cancelled, I requested my agents, Messrs. A. P. Watt & Sons, to inform him that I was prepared to agree, on the condition that, in place of it, he would substitute another—namely, that the articles should deal with rural England. Otherwise I would proceed to South Africa, as I had made all my plans to do. Pearson considered and, in the end, assented. I do not know that he was particularly anxious to exploit rural England in the columns of the *Daily Express*, but at any rate it was a fresh cry, whereas that of South Africa had become very stale indeed.

Before speaking of this matter, however, which only matured in the beginning of 1901, I will return for a moment to my travels which commenced at Florence. I had arranged verbally with Moberly Bell of *The Times* to visit Cyprus and the Holy Land, and to write for that journal some articles upon the affairs

of the Near East. I did visit Cyprus and the Holy Land, but the articles were never written. For this reason : I took with me a nephew, now a respected lawyer verging on middle age and, I may say, a relative for whom I have the greatest regard and the warmest affection, who was to act as my secretary. But if ever his eye should fall upon these lines I hope he will not be offended if I add that then, in the heyday of his very fascinating and festive youth, he proved the most erratic secretary with whom I have ever come in contact. I could never find him when I wanted him, and as for the heavy typewriter which we dragged about with us, all he did with it was to drop it on my toes out of the rack of a railway train. At last I got sick of the article, which alone clung to us after he had lost all the luggage on the Italian railways, causing us to proceed to Cyprus with practically nothing but the clothes in which we stood, and sent it home from that romantic isle packed in the remains of a mule-saddle, or something of the sort.

After this there was for a year or two a certain coolness between me and *The Times*, which had never received the promised articles, for of course I was unable to explain to them the real reason of my delinquencies. However, my affectionate nephew enjoyed himself enormously both in Cyprus and the Holy Land, whither I had taken him because I understood that he intended to enter the Church. As we sailed from Limasol for Beyrouth he said, in a hushed voice, that he had something to tell me.

'Speak up,' I answered, wondering, with an inward groan, whether he had engaged himself in marriage to the barmaid of the Nicosia Club.

It turned out, however, that what he had to confide was that he had changed his views about entering the

Church, and up to this point had concealed the matter for fear lest I should refuse to take him on to the Holy Land, but spoke now, perhaps because he did not wish to make the visit sailing under false colours. I reflected to myself that this *bouleversement* would be attributed to *my* evil influence, but said nothing. It all came right in the end, as such things do ; and I am bound to add that, although he did not shine as a secretary, a trade for which Nature never fashioned him, this dear nephew of mine was perhaps the pleasantest companion with whom I ever travelled.

In the intervals of getting him up in the morning and generally attending to his wants and my own, I managed to make some notes, out of which I subsequently wrote my book, ‘A Winter Pilgrimage.’

The Holy Land impressed me enormously, although it is the fashion of many travellers to say that there they find nothing but disappointment. But of all these matters I have written in the ‘Winter Pilgrimage,’ so I will say no more about them.

By the way, this ‘Winter Pilgrimage’ is, I think, unique in one respect : the first half of it was published serially *after* the last had already appeared. The managers of the *Queen* newspaper, who had agreed to bring out all that portion of the book which dealt with the Holy Land in this form, found the instalments so popular among their readers that they asked to be allowed to print the remainder, which dealt with Italy and Cyprus.

Before I pass to the subject of ‘Rural England’ I will dwell for a moment upon my only novel with a purpose, which appeared about a year previous to my journeyings in the Near East. It is called ‘Doctor Therne,’ and deals with the matter of the Anti-Vaccination craze—not, it may be thought, a very

promising topic for romance. I was led to treat of it, however, by the dreadful things I had seen and knew of the ravages of smallpox in Mexico and elsewhere, and the fear, not yet realised, that they should repeat themselves in this country. It was a dangerous move. Said the *Lancet* :

In conclusion we must commend Mr. Haggard's courage in thus entering the lists against the Anti-Vaccination party. As a novelist and a politician alike it is evidently to his advantage to take no step that would be likely to alienate from him any large body of possible supporters. Yet he has risked losing many readers and creating a fanatical opposition to whatever he may do in a public or private capacity for the sake of telling the truth.

Although so different in matter and manner from my other works, this tale has been widely read, and will in due course appear in one of those sevenpenny editions which have become so popular of recent years. I dedicated it (without permission) to the Jenner Society. The Executive Committee of this Society on December 22, 1898, passed a warm and unanimous resolution thanking me for the work.

Of 'Rural England,' the heaviest labour of all my laborious life, there is really not very much to say. There it is. I shall never forget the remark of my daughter Dolly, a young lady with a turn for humour, when these two great volumes—they contain as many words as would more than fill five novels—arrived from Messrs. Longmans and, portly, blue and beautiful, stood before us on the table. 'My word, Dad!' she said, 'if I had written a book like that, I should spend the rest of my life sitting to stare at it!'

I confess that before all was finished I was inclined to share in this opinion. What a toil was that! First there were the long journeys; one of them took eight

months without a break, though, happily, that summer was very different from this more disastrous year of cold and floods, 1912. Then there were the articles for the *Daily Express* and *Yorkshire Post*, which must be composed in my spare time, sometimes at midnight, of which I wrote more than fifty.

I do not think I could have completed the task at all without the assistance of my friend Mr. Arthur Cochrane, who took the notes while I did the talking, and also helped very much in the preparation of the series of agricultural maps. These maps, I regret to say, it was found impossible to include in the cheaper edition because of the cost of reproducing them.

But making the investigations was not all. After these came the writing of the work itself, whereof the articles only formed the foundation. This occupied the best part of another year of most incessant and careful application, for here every fact must be checked. It was the very antithesis to that involved in the composition of novels, where the imagination has free play. Here I may add that of the recorded results of these hundreds of interviews and statements made upon the individual authority of the persons seen, or from observation of the matters investigated, not one was subsequently questioned. No; I am wrong. The manager of the Great Eastern Railway took exception to some of the carriage rates quoted by an informant, for which I was not responsible. Also one gentleman who had invited me to inspect his farm spoke of 'minor inaccuracies and blemishes' in the account I gave thereof. In nearly twelve hundred closely printed pages that, I am proud to say, is *all*.

The work was well received, although of course there were those who found fault. Everyone has his own ideas as to how such a thing should be done, though

those who try to do it are few indeed. I too had my idea, which was to arrive at the truth out of the mouths of many witnesses. I desired to set down the facts as they were at the beginning of the twentieth century, not as they had been in the past or would possibly be in the future, or as people with various theories and political views would like to see them. I wished to preserve a large body of uncontested evidence for the benefit of future generations. Since that day things, I am glad to say, have changed a little—not very much—for the better ; and if I were to undertake such a task afresh—which Heaven forbid !—I might write otherwise on certain points. But I tried to draw a picture of our agriculture and rural conditions in the twenty-seven counties that, with the Channel Islands, I visited, which should be true and faithful to the circumstances of the time.

Some, of course, were angry with me because I did not advocate Protection as a remedy. Others of a different school were angry because I pointed out that Free Trade had wrought enormous damage to British agriculture, and that this same Protection, *if* it could be established, would go far to repair that damage. As a matter of fact, I began my travels a believer in Protection. By the time that I had finished them, rightly or wrongly I came to the conclusion that it was not feasible in England—a view which, during the last ten years or so that have elapsed since the publication of ‘Rural England,’ little has happened to controvert. Indeed, I still hold that Protection, or Tariff Reform, which is so widely advocated by the followers of Mr. Chamberlain, is a heavy stone tied round the neck of the Unionist dog, and one which it will find makes swimming difficult in our political waters.

I elaborated these views in a speech I made

some months after I published 'Rural England' at the Framlingham Farmers' Club, which speech has often been quoted since that time, when, it will be remembered, Mr. Chamberlain's proposals were very much before the country.

Well, Mr. Chamberlain's trumpet, which has been echoing through the land for the last ten years, has not yet shaken down the Free Trade walls, though it is possible that by the time these lines are read it may have done so. I cannot tell; nobody can tell except the Great Disposer of events. I can only put things as I see them. At any rate the point that I believe I was the first to place before the public in the above speech, although others took it up soon afterwards, is sound and clear. I can see no escape from the conclusion that, if food-stuffs are to be admitted to our markets practically free, while other imports are taxed, our agriculture must suffer to a terrible extent. The same thing applies, if in a less degree, to the admission of food-stuffs without impost from the constituent parts of the British Empire. It would make little difference to the British farmer, in these circumstances, whether the corn or the meat came in free from India and Canada or from Russia and the Argentine, if at the same time he had to pay more for his implements, his clothing, and every other article of daily life, and, as a consequence, a higher rate of wages, while he only realised the old low prices for what he had to sell. For, be it remembered, the British manufacturer competing with the foreign-made articles would certainly raise the cost of his output till it equalled, or almost equalled, the price at which such foreign articles could be profitably sold to the British consumer.

At first my hopes of any tangible result of my

labours were bitterly disappointed. Thus, when in January 1906, a little over three years later, I wrote a preface to a new edition of 'Rural England,' I find myself saying :

I wish I could add that I was able to point to any tangible fruits of its publication. This, however, I cannot do. Personally, I have made every effort to bring the reforms urged in its pages to the benevolent notice of those in authority. At some private cost I have inflicted upon them copies of these expensive volumes and been favoured in return with polite notes of thanks. I have interviewed certain of them who wished to receive me. I have neglected other work in order to travel up and down the country addressing every kind of meeting and explaining my views ; in short, of would-be agricultural reformers, I may say almost, that I have 'laboured more abundantly than they all.' Now after four years are gone by I must with humiliation report that nothing of any consequence has happened.

It is true that at one time I hoped that the great extension of parcel post privileges which, under the title of an Agricultural Post, I urged so earnestly in the interests of small holders, would pass into the region of accomplished fact. In February 1903 I wrote a letter on this subject to Mr. Hanbury, and I give an extract from his answer :

HOUSE OF COMMONS : *February 18, 1903.*

DEAR MR. HAGGARD,—I should have answered some days—or weeks—ago, but I have been in communication with the P.M.G., Henniker Heaton, and others on the subject you have done so much to bring to the front. So far from opposing the principle of your suggestion I am heartily in favour of it, and I am doing what I can to see it carried into practice. My criticisms are criticisms of detail. I do not think the scheme can be limited to agriculture or even to rural districts. It must



POND GARDEN, DUDCHINGHAM  
From "Gardener's Year."



apply all round. Nor is it practicable to compete for *long* distances with the Railway Companies. The coaches of the P.O. run to distances of 50 miles round London, and at present it costs the P.O. less to send parcels by that way than by rail. But the arrangement with the Railway Companies as to parcels expires very shortly now, and it remains to be seen whether they cannot be made to carry them very much cheaper in future. The weak point of the P.O. service as regards the country districts is that it distributes the parcels sent from the towns to almost every house free, but does not do so much for *collection* as it does for *distribution*. The result is that the flow of traffic is all in one direction. A farm-house or cottage a mile or a mile and a half from a P.O. can readily receive parcels from London, but to despatch one to London involves a walk of a mile or a mile and a half.

So again the limit of 11 lbs. is satisfactory to a town producer or tradesman, but it is not at all what the small farmer wants.

Knowing how keen your interest in these questions is and what good you have done already, I hope we shall be able to work side by side on this and many other points.

Yours sincerely,

R. W. HANBURY.

Of my answer there is a copy extant, from which I quote :

DITCHINGHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK :  
February 19, 1903.

DEAR MR. HANBURY,—It is with *great* pleasure that I have read your kind letter and learn from it that this Post is really to receive your support. Under these circumstances (although of course there will be endless difficulties and obstacles to overcome) I see no reason why it should not pass into the realm of accomplished fact. If so I am sure that coming generations will bless your name as the Minister who brought about a great and beneficent reform in our economic conditions and gave back some of its prosperity to the land. For it would—directly or indirectly—do these things.

I agree the Post could not be limited : all trades and persons must share its benefits. I think 'Goods Post' would be the best name.

I believe the Railway Companies would come in on reasonable terms for long distances. The General Manager G.E.R. told me straight out (after I had shown him what the thing really meant) that they would be glad to do so.

I agree that a collecting system is absolutely essential. Motors make this easy. It (the Goods Post) might be combined with some '*contre remboursement*' or pay-on-delivery plan. But most of the stuff should go doubtless to co-operative agencies who would sell it on the markets, crediting each producer with his share.

Believe me, sincerely yours,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

P.S.—I am convinced the reason that the idea of an Agricultural Post is not received with enthusiasm in every *agricultural* quarter (the town papers seem all to be much in favour of it) is that the farmers and their scribes believe that if it were conceded the concession would be used as an argument against their getting Protection on food-stuffs !

That is why so many of them oppose or belittle every useful reform : 'it might stop their getting Protection.' Therefore they never will unite to demand palliatives, but prefer to hanker after the unattainable !

Subsequently I had a most satisfactory interview with this Minister in his private room at the House of Commons, from which I emerged full of hope that the matter was really in a way of being put through.

A little later Mr. Hanbury died suddenly, and nothing more has been heard of the Goods Post from that day to this.<sup>1</sup> To my mind he was a great loss to the country, as in him departed a man open to new ideas ; one, too, animated by a sincere desire to advance the cause of agriculture.

<sup>1</sup> A Cash on Delivery postal service has at last been instituted.—ED.

Nearly two years later I received the following letter from the late Lord Onslow, who in his turn had become Minister of Agriculture.

CLANDON PARK, GUILDFORD :  
November 13 [1904].

DEAR SIR,—I have read with much interest not only your book on Rural England, but your speeches and letters to the Press on rural subjects ; and I thoroughly appreciate how much you have done to educate public opinion on rural matters.

I know, too, that in your opinion the Government have shown themselves supine in dealing with these questions.

Difficulties there are which perhaps are not within your knowledge, but there are two primary ones which take the heart out of any official reformer. One is the absolute impossibility of getting more than one or *two* important measures through the House of Commons in any Session, and then only by the use of the Closure, while measures to which only one single member is opposed cannot be brought on.

The other is the state of the national Exchequer and the falling off in the power of the Government to borrow at the low rates of former times.

I am in accord with you in much that you hold, but it is only possible for the Board of Agriculture to act where neither legislation nor expenditure is necessary.

I expect to be in London most of next week and the week after ; and if you should chance to be coming to town, I should much like to discuss some of these subjects with you.

I am, yours faithfully,  
ONSLOW.

Here is my answer to this letter :

DITCHINGHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK :  
November 15, 1904.

DEAR LORD ONSLOW,—I thank you very much for your letter. . . . Believe me, my Lord, I quite appreciate the difficulties you mention. At the same time I am so enormously impressed with the vital importance of the questions involved that I think every effort should be made to educate public

opinion until it consents to sweep away those difficulties and give a fair trial to reasonable reforms. It is my sense of the supreme necessity of these reforms that has induced a humble person like myself to write big books, take long journeys, make speeches, indite letters to newspapers, etc.—all gratis work, of course—in the intervals of getting my livelihood by other means. But as you wish to see me I will not trouble you with a long letter on all these matters.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

TO THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF ONSLOW.

In due course I had a long talk with Lord Onslow at his private house, during which he kindly but firmly pressed out of me all the information I had to give as regards small holdings and other matters. In the end he asked me what I thought had best be done. I replied that it would be well to begin by making a thorough inquiry into the circumstances of the whole business. He agreed, and we parted ; nor did I ever meet him again except once at a public dinner.

Subsequently he appointed a committee to investigate small holdings, on which he did *not* offer me a seat. Nor, to the best of my recollection, was I even asked to give evidence.

Thus did I keep ‘pegging away,’ on Nelson’s principle that it is ‘dogged as does it.’ Having no official position, of course I could only work from the outside, but I am sure that I missed no opportunity within my reach. Thus, to take an example almost at hazard, I find the copy of a letter written in some acerbity of spirit to Captain Kennedy, who was the Conservative agent for the Eastern Counties, in reply to an informal invitation to me to contest the Wisbech Division.

These exertions I continued down to the time of the fall of the Conservative Government, which I implored to do something in the direction of extending small holdings, if only for the sake of their own political skin. Needless to say, they took no notice. The only answers that ever reached me were to the effect that *they* were not going to 'window-dress.' Of course the reasons for this attitude are to be found in Lord Onslow's letter which I have already quoted. Moreover, I did not confine my endeavours to prominent members of the Conservative party, of whom I had begun to despair. This is shown by a letter which I addressed to Mr. Asquith, the present Prime Minister, who at that time, of course, was in Opposition, *à propos* of some speech he had made. Almost was I, never much of a party politician, driven to the Pauline attitude of being all things to all men if by any means I might win some. With Mr. Asquith I had some slight acquaintance. I remember Lord James of Hereford, whom I knew fairly well, introducing him to me one day when I was lunching at the Athenæum, on which occasion they both expounded to me the reasons of their strong dislike of Protection. Here is the letter :

DITCHINGHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK :  
March 19, 1903.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have read your speech reported yesterday, and in consequence I am venturing to ask your acceptance of the copy of my recently published work 'Rural England' which I send herewith. I hope that you may find time to glance at the book, and especially at the chapter headed 'Conclusions.' Most thoroughly do I agree with what you say as to the possibility of a vastly increased output of home-grown food. But this you will never get until you have co-operation and the *cheap carriage* which, as you may have seen, I am doing my best to advocate—under the form of an increase in postal

facilities. For this reason : without co-operation and cheap carriage the small holder cannot thrive ; and it is to him that you must look for an enlarged production—not to the large farmers. As regards the lack of rural cottages I agree that this is one of the great causes of the exodus to the towns (see Vol. II, pp. 519–520). But the lack of prospects is a greater. If labourers had a prospect of rising and could do well on the land as small holders they would soon get cottages, for then they could pay a rent at which these would be remunerative to build. Or more probably they would build their own, as at Evesham.

Now I believe that such prospects could be afforded to labouring men by means of some such moderate measures of reform as I have suggested (Vol. II, p. 555) *if only some British Government would really take the matter to heart.*

To my mind, to plunge everlastingly into foreign adventure after foreign adventure, however difficult and costly, and all the while to neglect our own land so cruelly is a madness. What will it benefit us to gain the whole earth if we are to lose our country-bred population ? Again, with all this outcry about our danger from lack of food, why not take the obvious remedy of *growing most of it at home* ? as we could do in my judgment, and without Protection.

Forgive me for having troubled you with this screed. I do so frankly in the hope of interesting you still more earnestly in a subject to which, trusting to do a little good, I have given so much time and labour—more indeed than my personal and material interests have justified me in doing. To you, sir, may come the opportunity of helping forward these reforms and thus truly benefiting our country.

Believe me, very truly, yours,  
H. RIDER HAGGARD.

THE RIGHT HON. H. H. ASQUITH.

As a matter of fact it was from the Radical party, with which I profoundly disagree upon certain points, that light came at last. They, as I know from sundry signs and tokens, had taken the trouble to study ‘ Rural

England.' At any rate the Development Board, which now does so much for agriculture, embodies somewhat closely, if with variations, the scheme of Government assistance for that industry which I outlined in the last chapter, headed 'Conclusions.'

The book has been very largely quoted, both here and in other countries, though often enough without acknowledgment, notably by politicians in search of ideas. For instance, Lord Rosebery—I need not say, with acknowledgment—has alluded to it more than once in his speeches, and so have many other prominent men. I remember that he pointed it out to me in his library, and told me, I think, that he had read it straight through.

I fear that this has been rather a dull chapter, for its subject is always dull, and he who descants thereon is apt to be considered an agricultural bore. Also it has involved the quotation of several letters and the reprinting of some extracts from books, which are apt to look wearisome in type. Yet I did not see how these could be omitted, since the words set down years ago do give exactly the writer's thoughts and views in a fashion more completely accurate than can any summary founded on his recollections. Memory is a treacherous thing, and one to which in such matters it is well not to trust.

Strange and varied were the establishments in which Cochrane and I often found ourselves as guests during the course of these 'Rural England' journeys. When it was announced that I was going to visit a given county we invariably received many kind offers of hospitality. Since, as a rule, we knew nothing of our would-be hosts, our method of dealing with these was to take a map and accept at hazard those invitations which would bring us nearest to the centre of

the various districts we wished to investigate. Really it was a wise plan, for it brought us into touch with all sorts and conditions of men.

When, at the given day and hour, we drove up to the residence of our unknown host, often enough it was without knowing whether we should find a palace or a farmhouse.

I could write a whole chapter, if not a small book, about the places where we stayed and their inhabitants. One night, for instance, we found ourselves in an ancient and gigantic baronial castle. Whilst I was undressing Cochrane arrived in my apartment, which was huge and gloomy, and asked me if I would mind coming to inspect his sleeping-place. I did, and by the light of a few struggling candles saw the most depressing room on which ever I had set eyes.

It was enormous, and in the centre of the back wall stood a four-post bed with black hangings and, I think, black hearse plumes at the corners. Round the walls were old, full-length family portraits of a singularly grim description—I imagine they must have been memorial pictures—while over the mantelpiece sat an awful old seventeenth-century woman who held a skull in her hands. This very skull, by the way, was kept in a cupboard upstairs, where I saw the thing, which had something to do with the history of the family, or rather of that which preceded it in the ownership of the castle and estate. Everything about the chamber was in thorough keeping with that skull; even the coal-box was black and shaped like a sarcophagus!

'This,' said Cochrane—a lover of cheerful surroundings—in a feeble voice, 'is no doubt the place where these people have been laid out for generations!'

Remembering the horrible 'black bed' in the Verney Memoirs, which used to be carted from house

to house whenever a death was expected in the family, I agreed with him, and departed, wishing him pleasant dreams and a good night's rest.

So huge was that castle—built, I believe, in the time of King John—that in the morning we were utterly unable to find our way to the breakfast-room. Up and down passages we wandered, till at last we saw a table with writing materials on it, and sat down there to answer letters, until ultimately we were retrieved.

Another strange experience was when we found ourselves in a bachelor house, of which the host, poor fellow—having, we understood, been crossed in love—was in the habit of looking upon the wine when it was red. In that house there was practically nothing to eat, for the reason that its owner ate practically nothing. I remember a certain pink and underdone veal and ham pie which, as I was extremely unwell at the time, did not excite appetite; also an egg which I asked for in place of the pie—but I will not dwell upon that egg! On the other hand, we literally swam in 1845—yes, 1845 vintage port. It was going at lunch, it was going at dinner, it was always going—I may add, it always went!

Our host, a most kindly-natured and wealthy man, finding out that I liked old furniture, took me to an attic which was stuffed with Jacobean oak and Georgian Chippendale. I admired the pieces, whereon he said in a careless voice, ‘If you like them, take them away. I don’t care for them.’

I was greatly tempted, but in all the circumstances did not feel justified in accepting this liberal offer.

But I must not continue the record of such reminiscences of our journeyings, since of these truly there is no end.

In the year 1903, which I spent at home, I wrote another work of a rural character, called 'A Gardener's Year.' This first appeared serially in the *Queen*, and was afterwards brought out in a handsome volume of nearly four hundred pages by Messrs. Longman. It went through two editions and gave pleasure to a good many people.

Also I wrote a romance of chivalry called 'The Brethren,' of which the scene is laid in the Holy Land at the time of the Crusaders. Personally it is a favourite with me, but my historical tales have never been quite so popular as are those which deal with African adventure.

## CHAPTER XIX

### PSYCHICAL

With eldest daughter to Egypt—Return by Italy and Spain—Abu Simbe with Carter—Bee's nest 2000 years old—'The Way of the Spirit'—Dedicated to Kipling—Death of H. R. H.'s retriever Bob—Appears to him in dream—Report published in *Journal of Society for Psychical Research*—Lasting effect on H. R. H.'s mind—More dream pictures—Sir Oliver Lodge.

EARLY in 1904 I took my daughter Angela on a trip to Egypt, returning by way of Italy and Spain. We went out on one of the new P. & O. boats which was making her maiden voyage, and experienced the most awful weather. We began by grounding in the Thames and, after a short stop to bury a Lascar overboard—who, poor fellow, had died of the cold—ran into a terrific gale in the Channel. The wind-gauges registered its pace at about eighty miles the hour, after which their bottoms were blown out or something happened to them. Then the fore-hatch was stove in and filled with water, as did the passages along which we had to walk from the cabins. Time after time did we stop to try and make that hatch good with four-inch teak planks, but always these were broken by the force of the sea.

Our subsequent misfortunes were many. We were taken in closer to Ushant than I thought pleasant ; the new engines heated ; the chief engineer went mad with the strain and, when at length we did reach Port Said, had to be carried ashore raving. I believe that

he died not long afterwards. One night this poor fellow, dressed in full uniform, rushed from cabin to cabin, telling the passengers to get up as the ship was sinking !

We took the turn into the Mediterranean about twenty-four hours late, and in the dense darkness caused by a fearful squall nearly went ashore on the coast of Africa, as the *Delhi* did in after years—I saw her wreck only the other day. When the light came I had a nearer view of that shore than I ever wish to see again—from the deck of an ocean liner. In Gibraltar harbour we fouled our anchor in a man-of-war's mooring chains and had to slip it. In the Gulf of Lyons we encountered a very bad *mistral* while we were trying to sling another anchor into its place. There it hung over the bow, bumping against the side of the ship. By this time the Lascars seemed to be practically useless, and the first officer was obliged to slide down the chain and sit on the fluke of the anchor, shouting directions. It was a strange sight to see this plucky young gentleman swinging about there over the deep. He was—and I trust still is—a man of whom the country might be proud, but I have long forgotten his name. In the end we crawled into Marseilles at three knots the hour, where some of the passengers left the ship, one of them explaining, for the comfort of the rest of us, that he had the strongest presentiments that she was going to sink.

Our next adventure was a sandstorm blowing from the coast of Africa which turned the day to darkness and covered the decks with a kind of mud. Then suddenly the vessel was put about, and it was discovered that the soundings showed that we were uncomfortably near the coast of Crete. As the dear old captain, who had been much cut about by a sea that

knocked him down on the bridge, remarked, 'he knew what was behind him and did not know what was before' ; also that 'where he had once been he could go again.' Subsequently our fore well-deck filled three times to the bulwarks, shipping seas in the most unaccountable manner.

However, we came to Port Said at length, and got ashore at about midnight as best we could. Never was I more glad to find myself on land again.

I enjoyed that trip in Egypt very much. The place has a strange fascination for me, and if I could afford it I would go there every year. On this my second visit we went as far as the wonderful rock-temple of Abu Simbel, near the Second Cataract of the Nile. Also I had the good fortune to be with Mr. Carter, then the local custodian of antiquities at Luxor ; when we visited the tomb of Queen Nefer-tari, which, with the exception of the discoverer, who, I think, was Professor Scaparelli, we were, I believe, the first white men to enter.

It was wonderful to see those paintings of her late Majesty as fresh as the day that the artist left them. In one of them, I remember, she is represented playing chess. The tomb had been robbed a couple of thousand years or so ago. When the ancient thief broke in it had recently been flooded by a rain-storm, and there on the walls were the marks of his hand printed on the paint which then was wet. Also a hermit bee had built its nest upon the roof—two thousand or so of years ago ! The sarcophagus had been broken up for its costly granite, which doubtless was worked into statues by some old-world sculptor, and the body of the beautiful favourite queen of Rameses destroyed. Some bones lay about in the tomb-chamber, probably those of the funeral offerings, and among them *ushapti*

figures, laid there to serve her Majesty in the other world.

I wrote a series of articles for the *Daily Mail* about these Egyptian experiences, which have never been republished, for such newspaper matter must needs be very scrappy. In one of these, however, I dwelt upon the subject of the wholesale robbery of the ancient Egyptian tombs and the consequent desecration of the dead who lie therein. It does indeed seem wrong that people with whom it was the first article of religion that their mortal remains should lie undisturbed until the Day of Resurrection should be haled forth, stripped and broken up, or sold to museums and tourists. How should we like our own bodies to be treated in such a fashion, or to be left lying, as I have often seen those of the Egyptians, naked and unsightly on the sand at the mouths of the holy sepulchres which with toil and cost they had prepared for themselves in their life-days? If one puts the question to those engaged in excavation, the answer is a shrug of the shoulders and a remark to the effect that they died a long while ago. But what is time to the dead? To them, waking or sleeping, ten thousand years and a nap after dinner must be one and the same thing. I have tried to emphasise this point in a little story that I have recently written under the title of 'Smith and the Pharaohs.'

Now I must dwell no more on Egypt with all its history and problems, which, whenever I can find time, it is my greatest recreation to study. Truly its old inhabitants were a mysterious and fascinating folk and, across the gulf of ages—largely, it must be admitted, through these very excavations—they have come very near to us again. I confess I know more of her kings, her queens, and her social conditions than I do of those of early England.

From Egypt we went to Naples and from Naples to the south of Spain, which I now visited for the first time in preparation for a tale which I wrote afterwards and named ' Fair Margaret.'

At Granada we saw that wondrous building, the Alhambra, and in the cathedral the tomb of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic. I descended into a vault and was shown the coffins of these great people ; also those of Philip le Bel and his wife Joanna. Readers of Prescott will remember that the mad Joanna insisted upon opening the coffin of her husband after he had been some while dead. I procured a candle and examined it, and there I could see the line where the lead had been cut through and soldered together again.

Of all the buildings that I saw upon this journey I think the mosque at Cordova, with its marvellous shrine and its forest of pillars of many-coloured marbles, struck me as the most impressive. The great cathedral at Seville, however, with its vast cold spaces runs it hard in majesty.

On my return to England I wrote ' The Way of the Spirit,' an Anglo-Egyptian book which is dedicated to Kipling, and one that interested him very much. Indeed he and I hunted out the title together in the Bible, as that of ' Renunciation,' by which it was first called, did not please him. Or perhaps this had been used before. I was glad to receive many letters from strangers thanking me for it.

In July 1904 there happened to me a very extraordinary incident. The story is contained in a letter from me which appeared in *The Times* for July 21, 1904, together with letters from various other persons testifying to the facts of the case. These letters and other matter were included in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* for October 1904, from which

I make short extracts relating the facts. Should any one wish to study it in detail, with the corroborating letters, they are referred to the number of the Society's Journal.

On the night of Saturday, July 9, I went to bed about 12.30, and suffered from what I took to be a nightmare. I was awakened by my wife's voice calling to me from her own bed upon the other side of the room. I dreamed that a black retriever dog, a most amiable and intelligent beast named Bob, which was the property of my eldest daughter, was lying on its side among brushwood, or rough growth of some sort, by water. In my vision the dog was trying to speak to me in words, and, failing, transmitted to my mind in an undefined fashion the knowledge that it was dying. Then everything vanished, and I woke to hear my wife asking me why on earth I was making those horrible and weird noises. I replied that I had had a nightmare about a fearful struggle, and that I had dreamed that old Bob was in a dreadful way, and was trying to talk to me and to tell me about it.

On the Sunday morning Mrs. Rider Haggard told the tale at breakfast, and I repeated my story in a few words.

Thinking that the whole thing was nothing more than a disagreeable dream, I made no inquiries about the dog and never learned even that it was missing until that Sunday night, when my little girl, who was in the habit of feeding it, told me so. At breakfast-time, I may add, nobody knew that it was gone, as it had been seen late on the previous evening. Then I remembered my dream, and the following day inquiries were set on foot.

To be brief, on the morning of Thursday, the 14th, my servant, Charles Bedingfield, and I discovered the body of the dog floating in the Waveney against a weir about a mile and a quarter away.

On Friday, the 15th, I was going into Bungay when at the level crossing on the Bungay road I was hailed by two plate-layers, who are named respectively George Arterton and Harry Alger. These men informed me that the dog had been killed by a train, and took me on a trolley down to a certain open-work

bridge which crosses the water between Ditchingham and Bungay, where they showed me evidence of its death. This is the sum of their evidence :

It appears that about 7 o'clock upon the Monday morning, very shortly after the first train had passed, in the course of his duties Harry Alger was on the bridge, where he found a dog's collar torn off and broken by the engine (since produced and positively identified as that worn by Bob), coagulated blood, and bits of flesh, of which remnants he cleaned the rails. On search also I personally found portions of black hair from the coat of a dog. On the Monday afternoon and subsequently his mate saw the body of the dog floating in the water beneath the bridge, whence it drifted down to the weir, it having risen with the natural expansion of gases, such as, in this hot weather, might be expected to occur within about forty hours of death. It would seem that the animal must have been killed by an excursion train that left Ditchingham at 10.25 on Saturday night, returning empty from Harleston a little after 11. This was the last train which ran that night. No trains run on Sunday, and it is practically certain that it cannot have been killed on the Monday morning, for then the blood would have been still fluid. Further, if it was living, the dog would almost certainly have come home during Sunday, and its body would not have risen so quickly from the bottom of the river, or presented the appearance it did on Thursday morning. From traces left upon the piers of the bridge it appears that the animal was knocked or carried along some yards by the train and fell into the brink of the water where reeds grow. Here, if it were still living—and, although the veterinary thinks that death was practically instantaneous, its life may perhaps have lingered for a few minutes—it must have suffocated and sunk, undergoing, I imagine, much the same sensations as I did in my dream, and in very similar surroundings to those that I saw therein--namely, amongst a scrubby growth at the edge of water.

I am forced to conclude that the dog Bob, between whom and myself there existed a mutual attachment, either at the moment of his death, if his existence can conceivably have been prolonged till after one in the morning, or, as seems more

probable, about three hours after that event, did succeed in calling my attention to its actual or recent plight by placing whatever portion of my being is capable of receiving such impulses when enchain'd by sleep, into its own terrible position.

On the remarkable issues opened up by this occurrence I cannot venture to speak further than to say that—although it is dangerous to generalise from a particular instance, however striking and well supported by evidence, which is so rarely obtainable in such obscure cases—it does seem to suggest that there is a more intimate ghostly connection between all members of the animal world, including man, than has hitherto been believed, at any rate by Western peoples ; that they may be, in short, all of them different manifestations of some central, informing life, though inhabiting the universe in such various shapes. The matter, however, is one for the consideration of learned people who have made a study of these mysterious questions. I will only add that I ask you to publish the annexed documents with this letter, as they constitute the written testimony at present available to the accuracy of what I state. Further, I may say that I shall welcome any investigation by competent persons.

I am, your obedient servant,  
H. RIDER HAGGARD.

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Times*.

The editor of the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* says :

This case is one of very unusual interest from several points of view. It is, therefore, specially satisfactory to have it so well authenticated, and Mr. Rider Haggard deserves the gratitude of psychical researchers for having collected all the available evidence so promptly and completely and put it at the disposal of the scientific world.

This experience produced a great effect upon me, and at first frightened and upset me somewhat, for without doubt it has a very uncanny side. By degrees,

however, I came to see that it also has its lessons, notably one lesson—that of the kinship, I might almost say the oneness, of all animal life. I have always been fond of every kind of creature, and especially of dogs, some of which have been and are as very dear friends to me. But up to this date I had also been a sportsman. Shooting was my principal recreation, and one of which I was, and indeed still am, extremely fond. Greatly did I love a high pheasant, at which sometimes I made good marksmanship. But now, alas ! I only bring them down in imagination with an umbrella or a walking-stick. From that day forward, except noxious insects and so forth, I have killed nothing, and, although I should not hesitate to shoot again for food or for protection, I am by no means certain that the act would not make me feel unwell. Perhaps illogically, I make an exception in favour of fishing, and I daresay that if salmon came my way I might once more throw a fly for them. I do not think that fish feel much ; also I always remember that, if He did not fish Himself, our Lord was frequently present while others did, even after His Resurrection ; further, that He ate of the results, and indeed by His power made those results more plentiful. Lastly, on one occasion—I allude to the case of the coin that was paid for poll-tax—this fishing was not carried on for the sake of food.

Again, harmful creatures must be destroyed since man must live, and so must those that are necessary to his physical sustenance, such as sheep and cattle, that is, until he becomes a vegetarian, as perhaps he will one day—a long while hence. In fact, subsequent to this date, I fell into great trouble and was held up to the readers of sundry journals as a cruel brute by persons who call themselves ‘ humanitarians ’

because, as a farmer, I advocated an organised State crusade against rats and sparrows, which (owing largely to the destruction of the hawk and owl tribes, and of other creatures of prey in the interest of game preservation) work such incalculable damage in this country. 'Humanitarians' evidently do not earn their living from the land. If they did they might take a different view of sparrows. It is, however, cheap to be pitiful at the expense of others !

I know that the above views on shooting may be thought a hard saying by many who greatly enjoy what they consider a harmless and a healthful sport. But really it is not so, since in such matters every man must act according to his own heart. If his conscience is *not* afraid of a thing, let him do it ; if it *is* afraid, let him leave it alone. So talks St. Paul of whatever is sold in the shambles. 'To him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, it is unclean.' 'All things indeed are pure ; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.' And again, 'He that doubteth is condemned if he eat because he eateth not of faith,' which I take it is another way of saying that a man must follow the light that is lit in him. Therefore, although I no longer shoot myself, I still go out shooting with my friends who are happy in so doing. So far as I am concerned, however, the net result of it all is that 'Othello's occupation's gone.' I have now no recreation left save that of the garden and of my solitary walks about the farm, which lead, perhaps, to too much thinking.

The publication of this 'Bob' correspondence in *The Times* and, I may add, everywhere throughout the civilised world, brought me many letters of which the general tenor went to prove that similar examples of such psychical or telepathic communications were by

no means unknown, though none of these were quite so clear as that which I have set out above. Nor were they so well supported by evidence. Moreover, it seemed almost certain that the dog Bob communicated with me *after* its death, which, if it could be absolutely and finally proved, as it cannot, would solve one of the mysteries of our being, by showing that the spirit even of a dog can live on when its mortal frame is destroyed and physical death has happened. If a dog—then how much more a man !

None of the experiences of my correspondents went so far as this. A number of these letters I sent to the Psychical Research Society, but a great bundle of them still remains which I have not the time to re-read. On this point of the continuance of individual existence after physical death, I once wrote a letter to Sir Oliver Lodge, who is both an eminent man of science and a great student of such hidden matters. I asked him whether he possessed such evidence as would satisfy a reasonable person, say a judge or a juryman, of the fact of the continued existence of the individual after his physical death. He answered :

As to your question—it is not an easy one. By scientific experience I have myself become absolutely convinced of persistence of existence, and I regard death as an important episode—the reverse of birth—but neither of these episodes really initial or final. One is the assumption of connection with matter, the other is the abandoning of that connection.

If it be further asked whether after we have abandoned matter we can, by indirect means, occasionally continue to act upon it—on the matter of the inorganic world or the matter of our friends' brains, for instance—I am inclined to answer, though now more doubtfully, that in my judgment the evidence points to the existence of some indistinct and undeveloped power of this sort.

The simplest and best developed variety of this continued interaction with matter is on the side of telepathy.

This is experimentally found existent between the living, and I have reason to believe that this is the one mode of communication which survives the transition, and that under favourable conditions we can still influence and be influenced by the process of events and emotions here. . . .

This is comforting, so far as it goes, and of course extremely interesting. But, after all, we have here only the experience and the deductions of one man who, brilliant and utterly upright as he is known to be, may still be mistaken like the rest of us. The manifestations exist—many can bear witness to them. But whence do they come? That is the question. May not some Power be mocking us that, directly or indirectly, draws its strength from our own vital forces and has its roots in our own intelligence, exalted in an access of spiritual intoxication? Yet if so, this does not explain the 'Bob' incident when I was seeking for nothing, and had gone to sleep tired out with my usual day's work. Why, in such circumstances, should this dog have materialised itself in my slumbering brain and at the moment of its death, or rather, as I firmly believe, several hours after that event? Therein lies a hint of great marvels.

Years afterwards another dream about an animal came to me which I embodied in the story called 'The Mahatma and the Hare,' a little book that, up to the present, has no great public vogue. Largely this is because so many of the papers neglected it as though it were something improper. Their reason was, I think, that they feared to give offence to that great section of their readers who, directly or indirectly, are interested in sport, by extended notices of a parable which doubtless in its essence amounts to an attack

upon our habit of killing other creatures for amusement. I hope, however, that its day may come, though perhaps not yet.

As I am touching on mystical subjects, probably for the last time, I will instance here a series of imaginings which developed themselves in my mind at intervals over a period of several months early in the present year. I noted them down at the time and, except for an addendum to No. 4, give them without alteration, as I think it best not to interfere with the original words, on which, perhaps unconsciously, I might attempt to improve. Indeed it would be easy to make a story out of each of these mind-pictures. At the head of them I have stated the alternative explanations which occur to me. Personally I favour—indeed I might almost say that I accept—the last.

Only then the question will arise as to whether it is possible for us to imagine *anything* that has not, somewhere in this great universe whereof we only know the fringe, an actual counterpart, perhaps very distorted, of some unseen truth? However far we throw out our mental hands, can they close on anything which is not in its essence a fact, or the reflection of a fact? Are we not walled in by facts, and is it within our scope to travel one inch beyond that wall? But the thing is very subtle, and I am by no means certain that I make my meaning clear. Moreover, it could be argued in a dozen ways, and as these dream-pictures are merely given as a curiosity in which I have no personal faith, it is not worth while to waste time in discussing them. Here they are:

During the past few months there have come to me, generally between sleeping and waking, or so it seemed, certain pictures. These pictures, it would

appear, might be attributed to either of the three following causes :

- (1) Memories of some central incident that occurred in a previous incarnation.
- (2) *Racial* memories of events that had happened to forefathers.
- (3) Subconscious imagination and invention.

Probably the last of these alternatives is the one which most people would accept, since it must be remembered that there is nothing in any one of these *tableaux vivants* which I could not have imagined—say as an incident of a romance.

Now, before I forget them, I will describe the pictures as well as I can.

1. A kind of bay in a thicket formed of such woods as are common in England to-day, especially hazel, as they would appear towards the end of June, in full leaf but still very green. A stream somewhere near. At back, in a tall bank, something like the Bath Hills,<sup>1</sup> the mouth of a cavern. About thirty feet from this a rough hut made of poles meeting on a central ridge (I have forgotten how it was thatched). In front of the hut a fire burning, and an idea of something being cooked by a skin-clad woman, I standing by, a youngish man, tall ; children playing round, and notably a boy of about ten standing on the hither side of the fire, his nakedness half covered by the pelt of some animal, his skin, as he lifts his arms, very white. A general sense of something about to happen.

2. A round hut, surrounded by a fence, standing on a grassy knoll, no trees about. A black woman moving within the fence and, I think, some children ; myself there also, as a black man. An alarm below,

. 1 Above the river Waveney.—ED.

which causes me to take a spear and run out. A fight with attackers ; attackers driven off, but I receive a spear-thrust right through the middle below the breast, and stagger up the slope mortally wounded back into the enclosure round the hut, where I fall into the arms of the woman and die.

3. A great palace built in the Egyptian style. Myself, a man of about thirty, in quaint and beautiful robes wound rather tightly round the body, walking at night up and down some half-enclosed and splendid chamber through which the air flows freely. A beautiful young woman with violet eyes creeps into the place like one who is afraid of being seen, creeps up to me, who start at seeing her and appear to indicate that she should go. Thereon the woman draws herself up and, instead of going, throws herself straight into the man's arms.

4. An idea of boundless snows and great cold. Then the interior of a timber-built hall, say forty feet or more in length, a table by a doorway and on it three or four large dark-coloured trout, such as might come from a big lake. Wooden vessels about, brightly painted. A fire burning in the centre of the hall, with no chimney. On the farther side of the fire a bench, and on the bench a young woman of not more than two- or three-and-twenty, apparently the same woman as she of the Egyptian picture, or very like her, with the identical large violet eyes, although rather taller. She is clothed in a tight-fitting grey dress, quite plain and without ornament, made of some rough frieze and showing the outline of the figure beneath. The hair is fair, but I cannot remember exactly how it was arranged. The woman is evidently in great grief. She sits, her elbow resting on her knee, her chin in her hand, and stares hopelessly into the fire. Presently some-

thing attracts her attention, for she looks towards the door by the table, which opens and admits through it a tall man, who, I know, is myself, wearing armour, for I catch the sheen of it in the firlight. The woman springs from the bench, runs round the fire, apparently screaming, and throws herself on to the breast of the man.

The general impression left is that she had believed him to be dead when he, probably her husband, appeared alive and well.

(Some months later I was favoured with an impression of another scene set in the same surroundings. In this picture postscript, if I may call it so, the identical man and woman, now persons of early middle age, were standing together in bitter sorrow over the doubled-up and fully-dressed body of a beautiful lad of about eighteen years of age. Although I saw no wet upon his clothes I think that he had been drowned.)

5. The mouth of a tunnel or mine-adit running into a bare hillside strewn with rocks and debris. Standing outside the tunnel a short, little woman of about twenty-five, with black hair, brown eyes, and brownish but not black skin, lightly clad in some nondescript kind of garment. Resting on her, his arm about her shoulders, an elderly man, very thin and short, with a sad, finely-cut face and sparse grizzled beard, wearing a dingy loin-cloth. The man's right foot covered with blood, and so badly crushed that one of the bones projects from the instep. The woman weeping. By his side on the ground a kind of basket filled with lumps of ore, designed to be carried on the back and fitted with two flat loops of hide, with a breast-strap connecting them, something on the principle of children's toy reins. Growing near by a plant of the aloe tribe, the bottom leaves dead, and some

of those above scratched in their fleshy substance, as though for amusement.

Walking up the slope towards the pair a coarse, strong, vigorous, black-bearded man with projecting eyes. He is clothed in white robes and wears a queer-shaped hat or cap, I think with a point to it. From an ornamented belt about his middle hangs a short sword in a scabbard, with a yellowish handle ending in a knob shaped like to the head of a lion. He carries over his head a painted umbrella or sunshade that will not shut up, and is made either of thin strips of wood or of some kind of canvas stretched on a wooden frame.

General idea connected with the dream that this man is an overseer of slaves who is about to kill the injured person as useless and take the woman for himself. She *might* be the daughter of the injured man, or possibly a wife a good deal younger than he. In any case she is intimately connected with him. Further idea. That the injured man was once an individual of consequence who has been reduced to slavery by some invading and more powerful race.

The characteristics of the site of the picture remind me of Cyprus.

I described these tableaux to Sir Oliver Lodge when I met him in the Athenæum not long ago, and asked him his opinion concerning them. He was interested, but replied that if they had appeared to him he would have thought more of them than he did as they had appeared to me, because he said that he lacked imagination. The curious little details such as that of the dark-coloured trout on the table in No. 4, and that of the scratchings on the aloe leaves in No. 5, seemed to strike him very much, as did the fact that all the scenes were such as might very well, and indeed doubt-

less have occurred again and again in the course of our long human history, from the time of the cave-dwellers onwards. Probably if we could trace our ancestors back to the beginning, we should find that on one occasion or another they have happened to some of them. I may add that by far the prettiest and most idyllic of these pictures was that of the primitive family in the midst of its green setting of hazel boughs by the mouth of the cave. Only over it, as I have said, like a thunder-cloud brooded the sense of something terrible that was about to happen. I wonder what it was.

And now farewell to the occult. Mysticism in moderation adds a certain zest to life and helps to lift it above the level of the commonplace. But it is at best a dangerous sea to travel before the time. The swimmer therein will do well to keep near to this world's sound and friendly shore lest the lights he sees from the crest of those bewildering, phantom waves should madden or blind him, and he sink, never to rise again. It is not good to listen for too long to the calling of those voices wild and sweet.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE ROOSEVELT LETTERS

Appointed Commissioner to report to Secretary of State for Colonies on  
Salvation Army Labour Colonies in U.S.A.—Alfred Lyttelton H. R. H.'s  
daughter Angela goes with him as secretary—Washington—Mr Hay—  
President Roosevelt—The White House—Notes of interview with Roose-  
velt—Correspondence with Roosevelt.

IN January 1905 I received, quite unexpectedly, the following letter from the Right Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, who at that date was Secretary of State for the Colonies.

DOWNING STREET · *January 14, 1905.*

DEAR MR. RIDER HAGGARD,—The Rhodes Trustees have agreed to give a sum of £300 (inclusive of all expenses) to defray the expense of sending a Commissioner to the United States to inspect and report upon the 'Labour Colonies' established in the United States by the Salvation Army. There appear to be at present three of these, in California, Colorado, and Ohio, and they are used for the transmigration of persons from the big American cities. It is thought that if on inquiry this system is found to be financially sound and to be a real benefit to the poorer classes, it might prove a useful model for some analogous system of settlement from the United Kingdom to the Colonies.

It is the desire of the Rhodes Trustees that the Commissioner should be nominated by and report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I should be very glad if you would consent to do the work, for which your experience as an observer both of men and agricultural affairs so eminently qualifies you. The remuneration is not very great, but the interest of the question to which

the inquiry will relate and the public service which the Commissioner will be able to do may induce you, I hope, to undertake it.

If you go, you would in the first place be put into communication with the Salvation Army authorities. Mr. Booth Tucker, who commands their United States branch, considers that the Commissioner should start as early in the year as practicable, because he would have better opportunities of seeing the settlers and talking with them before the more strenuous agricultural operations have commenced.

I should therefore be obliged if you would be so good as to let me know in a few days whether you will be able and willing to go, and if so, whether you could start in February.

Yours faithfully,

ALFRED LYTTELTON.

H. RIDER HAGGARD, Esq.

I extract the following passage from my answer :

I thank you for your letter and the compliment you have paid me. I accept your invitation to undertake this mission, especially as the subject is one that interests me very much ; indeed I was speaking on a branch of it at the meeting at York last week of which Mr. Seeböhm Rowntree was chairman. . . . I understand that I shall receive my appointment as Commissioner and my instructions from you as Secretary of State, not from the Rhodes Trustees, and that it will be so gazetted.

Shortly after I received a letter from Mr. Lyttelton's secretary, Mr. Graham, which I print to show what were the exact terms of my instructions.

DOWNING STREET : *January 31, 1905.*

SIR,—I am directed by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton to inform you that he has nominated you to be a Commissioner to proceed to the United States, and to inspect and to report to him upon the conditions and character of the Agricultural and Industrial Settlements which have been established there by the Salvation Army, with a view to the transmigration of suitable persons

from the great cities of the United States to the land and the formation of Agricultural Communities.

2. It appears to the Secretary of State that, if these experiments are found to be successful, some analogous system might with great advantage be applied in transferring the urban populations of the United Kingdom to different parts of the British Empire.

3. You should pay special attention to the class of persons taken by the Salvation Army, their training and success as agricultural settlers, and the general effect upon character and social happiness ; you should also consider the financial aspects of the experiments.

4. It would be desirable that, after you have inspected the several Settlements, you should proceed to Ottawa and discuss the subject with Lord Grey, who has taken great interest in it, as well as with such local authorities as may be indicated to you by the Governor-General as likely to aid you with advice and assistance as to the application of the system in a British Colony.

5. The Rhodes Trustees, with whom the suggestion of the Inquiry originated, and by whom Mr. Lyttelton has been asked to nominate a Commissioner, have made a grant of £300, including all travelling expenses, to meet the cost of the Inquiry.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

FRED. GRAHAM.

H. RIDER HAGGARD, Esq.

I remember that when I went to see the Colonial Secretary to receive his verbal instructions before sailing, by some accident I missed the right entrance to the Colonial Office and finally obtained admission through a little back-door. At the time this circumstance struck me as curiously emblematic of my position. For after a cessation of twenty-six years was I not once again entering the official service of my country through a back-door, by means of this unexpected commission with which I was now honoured ?

I inspected the Salvation Army colony at Hadleigh. Also I had a long interview with General Booth, and in due course I arrived at New York accompanied by my daughter Angela, who acted as my secretary. Here I was seized upon by interviewers, one instance of which I must record, because it is amusing. In the Waldorf Hotel we had three rooms—my daughter's, my own, and a place for sitting. About two o'clock one night the telephone in each of these rooms (every room in an American hotel has a telephone) began to ring furiously. I leapt from my bed and tried to attend to two of them. While I was doing so my poor daughter arrived shivering in her nightgown (there were many degrees of frost), exclaiming, 'Oh, Dad, *do* come here! There is a lunatic on the telephone who says he wants me to come out walking in the streets.'

It turned out that some enterprising newspaper was distributing food to the New York poor, and thought that it might get an advertisement by our presence at the process.

After this the young lady in question became artful. When she went to bed she took the receiver off the telephone. After I had cut my foot open in a sudden and sleepy midnight rush to that instrument, so did I!

Having paid some official visits we went to Philadelphia, where I inspected the vacant lots which a local society enabled poor people to cultivate. Also I was entertained at luncheon by the Franklin Club, a society of gentlemen connected with literature, of which Dr. Weir Mitchell, the great nerve specialist, was the venerated president. This was a truly delightful meal, and one of which I shall always retain most grateful recollections.

From Philadelphia I proceeded to Washington, where I lunched with the late Secretary of State,

Mr. Hay, a most refined and agreeable man who, I found, was a friend of my brother William. His name is now prominently before the public in connection with the Hay Pauncefote Treaty *re* the Panama Canal. On the 9th of March the Under-Secretary, Mr. Loomis, took us to see the President, Mr. Roosevelt, who was then celebrating his inauguration. The White House was crowded with people waiting to shake hands with the new Chief of the State, amongst whom I noted a band of Indian chiefs, men with long black hair, copper-coloured skins, and strongly marked features. Mr. Loomis took us to the President's private room, a double chamber connected with a large ante-room by folding doors. These doors stood open, and beyond them were gathered a number of gentlemen awaiting the President. I take it that they were the Council of State or Cabinet.

Then the President appeared and shook hands with us warmly. He was, and indeed still is,<sup>1</sup> a short, stout man with a fair, fresh complexion and rows of very even teeth, which he shows in their entirety every time he smiles. In manner he is frank and earnest, nor does he mince his words and opinions.

First he waved his hand towards the gentlemen in the ante-room and, pointing to the door, beyond which the crowds through which we had passed were gathered, said that there I beheld the aftermath of a presidential election in a democratic country. Then he asked me my views upon the South African situation, adding that he was himself of Dutch descent.

I gave them, and he expressed his hope that the Boers in South Africa, with whom he had great sympathy, would settle down, learn English, and become a dominant factor in that country under the British

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1912.—ED.

flag and rule. He added that he had expressed these views strongly to those of their leaders who had visited him in America, which shows that he, at least, was not working against us in the South African War.

Our talk next turned upon matters connected with the land and with the absolute necessity of keeping the population on the soil and not allowing it to flock into the cities. I found that his views and mine upon this point were identical, as he recognised the inevitable deterioration of the race which must ensue if the land-dwellers were to become city-dwellers. He spoke also on the subject of the limitation of families, and instanced the case of the French Canadians who, in some districts, he declared, were crowding out the British-born folk in the Dominion. These Frenchmen, he informed me, settle upon the land and have large families, whereas the English Canadians draw to the cities. Also he instanced the case of Australasia. He impressed me as a thoroughly sound and reliable man—one whose heart was in the right place, and who would do the best he could for his nation during the time it was in his care, and for humanity at large.

A few days later my daughter and I were entertained at luncheon at the White House, to which we went straight from another luncheon, where we were also entertained by citizens of note in Washington.

It was a most amusing meal. Especially do I recollect Mr. Roosevelt's comic sketch of the anticipated details of a forthcoming meeting between himself and the Swiss Minister, who was attending at the White House to present his credentials.

'He,' he said, 'will stand in a fine uniform and read a lot of rot to me in French, while I shall stand opposite to him and read a lot of rot in English. And that's what they call the high ceremonies of diplomacy!'

'It is an odd thing, Mr. Haggard,' he said, as he entered the private drawing-room after luncheon, 'that you and I, brought up in different countries and following such different pursuits, should have identical ideas and aims. I have been reading your book, "Rural England," and I tell you that what you think, I think, and what you want to do, I want to do. We are one man in the matter'; or words to that effect.

I could only answer that I was extremely glad to hear it.

I may add that I was not wrong in supposing that the President would try to put these ideas into action, as indeed is shown by his famous Conservation Act, the passing of which he subsequently brought about; also by many other of his administrative deeds. Further, should he ever return to power again, I am convinced that he will push on along these lines.

In proof of what I say—since, before proceeding with the account of my American mission, I think that for convenience' sake it will be well here to finish the story of my relations with President Roosevelt—I will quote the substance of a note I made of an interview which I had with him in London more than five years later. Also I will quote several letters which have subsequently passed between us.

*June 2, 1910.*

I saw Mr. Roosevelt and his family this afternoon at 10 Chesterfield Street. He was extremely pressed, and informed me that he had not even found time to put on a black coat since coming up from staying with Selous. I told him the result of my American mission. He said that it was most disheartening, but always the case where officials could have their way. I congratulated him upon his Natural Resources Conservation Policy. He answered that he was making a big fight upon that point.

The Bishop of Massachusetts, who was present, said to Mr. Roosevelt that I approved of his famous Guildhall speech.

'Ah!' he said, 'I knew I should have Haggard's support.'

(On this point Kermit Roosevelt, his son, told me that both Balfour and Grey were pleased with the speech.)

I informed Mr. Roosevelt of the investigations that I had just arranged to carry out for the Salvation Army.<sup>1</sup> He said that this was 'a grand work' which I proposed to do, and he only wished he could have found time to come round with me, adding with much earnestness :

'Why not make use of all this charitable energy, now often misdirected, for national ends?'

'What I have called "the waste forces of Benevolence,"' I said. 'It is odd, Mr. Roosevelt, that we should both have come to that conclusion.'

'Yes, that's the term,' he answered. 'You see, the reason is that we are both sensible men who understand.'

In saying good-bye to me, Mr. Roosevelt said, 'It's a barren thing to say, but I want to tell you how deeply I admire all your social work, and, if you care to know it, I should like to add that I have found it a strength and a support to myself in my own struggles. . . . It's almost an insult to ask you here rushed as I am, but I did want to have a word with you, and had no other chance.'

I also spoke to him about Horace Plunkett's work. He answered that he thought most highly of him and that he, Plunkett, was coming over to America to see him.

Subsequently I read in the American *Outlook* a most interesting signed article by Mr. Roosevelt *à propos* of my social work, and especially of the book called 'Regeneration' that I had written on the Salvation Army.

As to this review Mr. Roosevelt wrote to me regretting that he could not have made the article ten times as long.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 216, Vol. II.—Ed.

To this I answered on August 8, 1911 :

I thank you most heartily. I cannot tell you how greatly I appreciate the good opinion of a man like yourself, and, what is so very rare, the public expression of that opinion. As a private individual I find my task very hard : to drive into the intelligence of a blind and careless generation certain elementary facts which it cannot or will not understand is always difficult, especially if the wielder of the hammer is not rich. If I could afford it I would devote the rest of my life to this kind of educational work in my own land and others. But I fear I can't, and in this country no kind of help is forthcoming to make such efforts possible.

Of Mr. Roosevelt's long answer I quote the beginning and the end, omitting all the central part of the letter, which deals with various social problems. I will call special attention to the last lines of this letter, which I think show a high and fine spirit.

*The Outlook, 287 FOURTH AVENUE,  
NEW YORK : August 22, 1911.*

DEAR MR. HAGGARD,—I have been reading 'Rural Denmark' with genuine interest, and I congratulate you upon the work. I was especially interested in the rather melancholy chapter at the end—'What might be and what is.' I agree with every word you say about the land. . . .

I do not wonder that you feel discouraged and blue at times. As you say, it seems a hard and thankless task to have to try to hammer into your generation what is vital for them to learn and what they refuse to learn. I half smiled when I read what you wrote, because I so often have the same feeling myself. As President I tried, and I now continue to try, to teach lessons that I feel ought to be learned by my fellow-countrymen ; and I often wonder how much I am accomplishing by it. There are so many important lessons that ought to be learned, and the art of preaching so that it will at least do no harm is such a very difficult art to acquire and to practise ! I often become quite horrified at the multitude of profoundly dull and uninteresting little books and pamphlets and articles and tracts,

all with a worthy purpose, which are sent to me by other men interested in trying to teach something which they believe ought to be taught ; I wonder whether I seem the kind of dull pointless bore to the people I am trying to help as so many of these worthy people seem to me ! I think your business and mine is to go ahead, never to stop trying to help along the lines we have marked out, and yet to keep our sense of humor and sense of proportion and equability of nature. We must not preach all the time, or we will stop doing any good ; for we must always remember not to fall into the snare of preaching for the purpose of relieving our own souls instead of for the purpose of accomplishing something as regards somebody else's soul. We must not permit ourselves to become soured by our experiences, for being gloomy does not in the least help a man to reach others, and merely makes him less attractive to himself and to all around him. Life is a campaign, and at best we are merely under-officers or subalterns in it. We are bound to do our duty as efficiently and as fearlessly as we know how ; but it is a good thing to remember that we must not be too much cast down even if things look wrong, because melancholy only tends to make us less and not more efficient, and buoyancy and good-humor and the ability to enjoy life all help instead of hindering a reformer.

Well ! I have written you an unconscionably long letter. Good-bye and good luck !

Faithfully yours,  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

H. RIDER HAGGARD, Esq.,  
Ditchingham House,  
Norfolk.

I answered as follows :

DITCHINGHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK :  
*September 5, 1911.*

MY DEAR MR. ROOSEVELT,—Many thanks for your interesting letter of August 22nd. I think that the cause of the 'trouble among the peoples who speak English' is twofold, the love of pleasure and the love of wealth, both of which affections can, for the majority, be most easily gratified in

cities. Doubtless the Golden Calf is the most popular of all gods ancient or modern, and he does not build his shrines amongst woods and fields. Moreover his worship becomes ever more facile, since during the last century a new code of morality has matured in these matters.

Rogues, of course, there always were, but in the days of our grandfathers not so many, I think, of the 'indifferent honest.'

I have a few shares in certain commercial undertakings. A week or so ago I observed that the price of these shares was falling rapidly. When they had, so to speak, bumped against the bottom, in each case the shareholders were notified of certain troubles and miscalculations that had occurred. The next day the papers pointed out that the 'insiders' had been unloading their shares at the high price before warning the shareholders of what had happened, and remarked that this furnished another proof of the helplessness of the investor in the hands of the said insiders, who are, I suppose, the directors and their friends.

Now I frequently have to send people to prison who through poverty or actual want have stolen something, but no one will send these 'insiders' to prison, although they are worse than ordinary thieves because they betray the confidence of those who trusted them and whose interests they are paid to promote. On the contrary, their rapidly acquired wealth will be admired, they will be spoken of with respect as successful men, and probably in the end receive or purchase titles.

Now in the conditions of a simple pastoral life dishonesty, even if innate, could scarcely bring such rich rewards.

Apply the argument to the various classes of mankind and I think we have one of the causes of the popularity of the town.

Another is, of course, that there women can show themselves off, their jewels and dresses, if rich; or if poor, can have the advantages of cheap amusements. In most people the love of Nature scarcely exists; it seems to be the privilege of the highly educated. But ninety-eight out of a hundred love a gas-lamp.

Speaking generally, this seems to be the state of affairs among all the more progressive of the white peoples. I hear that even the Boers of whom you speak are in a good many instances beginning to be affected by this kind of tidal movement towards

the town. How will it end ? That is the interesting point. My opinion is that in the absence of some unforeseen and unexpected turn of this tide it will involve the practical destruction of the white peoples, and that within a measurable time, say, two or three centuries. Except in the case of those of a lower stratum whose progeny soon die out or become degenerate, the town women do not have many children ; in fact there seems to be a rebellion against this burden amongst most married women. Also the increase of luxury and the cost of living all tend towards the same end. Only on the land are children welcome, that is if this land is *owned* by their parents, who find their labour valuable. Look at France. Were it not for the support of England, Germany would soon have her in its bag. But the same causes that are reducing France to a state of political death are, I am told, beginning to work at the heart of her enemies, the Germans. Look at Australia. If there were no British fleet how long would it be before it received a considerable number of immigrants of the Mongol type ? And so on.

But all these arguments are commonplace to you. The question is, Whither do they lead, supposing them to be accurate ?

I think, to two alternative conclusions. The first alternative is that the Almighty has had enough of the white races and is bringing about their ruin through their own failings as in past days He brought about the ruin of Rome, purposing once more to fill their places from the East. The second alternative is that He is pointing out to them that their only possible rejuvenation, their only salvation lies in the closer settlement of the land which they neglect.

Denmark has learned something of this lesson, and that is why to me its example seems so important. Personally also I believe it to be the first of truths, and that is why I try to preach it in and out of season. But the sporting owner and the tenant farmers of this country, both of which classes find things very well as they are, do not share my views, and say so with vigour. The future will show which of us is in the right.

. . . I quite agree with all that you say at the end of your letter ; indeed I think that these are fine words. All that one

can do is to peg away and not be discouraged. Then at least one has done one's humble best in the little hour that is granted, leaving the ultimate issues in the hands of Fate and the future. If no one will listen, if the opposing interests are too strong, at least one has cried aloud in the wilderness and done one's best.

With very kind regards,

Believe me,

Ever sincerely yours,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

About a year later I wrote a note to Mr. Roosevelt, saying that of course American politics were no affair of mine, and that I would not venture to say anything about them. Still, as I believed that his heart was in the right place, I wished him success in his arduous struggle.

To this note I received the following reply, which strikes me as of extraordinary interest. The opening of it, of which the note is 'misunderstood,' is somewhat pathetic ; the writer's conviction as to the approaching 'general smash-up of our civilisation' unless certain conditions can be put a stop to is of much weight coming from such a man, and the conclusion throws a light upon his character which would astonish many even in this country.

OFFICE OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT,  
*The Outlook*, 287 FOURTH AVENUE,  
NEW YORK. June 28, 1912.

DEAR MR. HAGGARD,—I have but a moment in which to answer your welcome letter, as I am driven almost to death. There are but a limited number of my own countrymen, among those of the highest education, who understand as you do just what I am striving for. I suppose that as we grow older we naturally lose the natural feeling of young men to take an interest in politics just for the sake of strife—the same kind of interest one takes in big game hunting or football, the kind of

interest quite compatible with doing excellent work but which cannot inspire the highest kind of work. As we get older, if we think seriously at all, and if we escape falling into a permanent Palmerstonian jauntiness of attitude, we cannot avoid becoming deeply and indeed painfully impressed with the tremendous problems of our social and industrial life. To me politics and applied ethics ought to be interchangeable terms, and my interest in the former arises chiefly from my interest in the latter. If the whole game is one of mere sound and fury, without any sincerity back of it, any real purpose of achievement, then it is all of as little importance as a contest between the blues and the greens in the Byzantine circus. I am, I hope and believe, a practical man, and I abhor mere sentimentality ; but I abhor at least as much the kind of so-called practical man who uses the word 'practical' to indicate mere materialistic baseness, and who fails to see that while we of course must have a material and economic foundation for every successful civilisation, yet that the fabric cannot be lasting unless a warp of lofty disinterestedness and power of community feeling is shot through the woof of individualistic materialism. Have you ever read 'No. 5 John Street'? I happened to be reading it the other day. Now I know I cannot ever achieve more than the very smallest part of what I would like to do, but at least I wish to take part in a movement for using the government so far as may be to put a stop to the dreadful conditions at both ends of the social scale which are described in 'No. 5 John Street.' In the same way, I wish to get the government interested in conservation, and in restoring the people to the land. I do not know whether we will be able to succeed in the great movement for social and industrial reform, which includes all such movements as the two I have mentioned, but I do know that the alternative is a general smash-up of our civilisation ; and succeed or fail, I hold it to be the duty of every decent man to fight to avoid such a smash.

I hope you do come to Canada and then I shall see you here and have a chance of talking over some of these matters, which are of such vital importance, and which the average man treats as of no importance whatever.

As for my personal fortunes, they are of no consequence whatever, except in so far as they are for the moment connected with this movement. The great bulk of my wealthy and educated friends regard me as a dangerous crank because I am trying to find a remedy for evils which if left unremedied will in the end do away not only with wealth and education, but with pretty much all of our civilisation. The majority of people veer one way or the other according to whether at the moment I seem to succeed or fail, and are quite incapable of believing that I am concerned with anything but my own success or failure. But all this is of little permanent consequence. It is a fight that must be made, and is worth making ; and the event lies on the knees of the gods.

Faithfully yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

To this letter I answered :

DITCHINGHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK :  
*July 14, 1912.*

MY DEAR MR. ROOSEVELT,—I thank you for your letter. . . . I too hold that the civilised world wallows in a slough worse, perhaps, than the primeval mud of the savage ; that it is possible (if not probable) that it may be dragged from that slough, cleansed and clothed in white garments. That it is the bounden duty of all men as they shall answer for it at the last to do their honest best to bring this about ; regardless of any wreaths of success, of any dust of failure, regardless of everything save that glory which, in all probability, will never crown their individual strivings, or, if it comes, be at all identified with their half-forgotten names.

This, I imagine, is a conviction that comes home to certain of us with an added force when some of the cables that bind us here are slipped and our being begins to thrill beneath the pull of that tide which flows over the edge of the World. At least it has come home to me, grieving in my own impotence, and I am sure that it has come home to you. Our Faith then is the same. How can that Faith be—not fulfilled—but put in the way of fulfilment by others who come after ? . . .

Let us suppose that you succeed and reach great power, now or later. I daresay you will not : as you say, it is on the knees of the gods, or rather of God—and heaven knows, I shall think no differently of you if you succeed or fail, but let us suppose it. What could you do—or strive to do ?

You are confronted with a hideous problem. The other day, in a hairdresser's shop, I took up one of our illustrated papers. In it was a reproduced photograph of a number of your New York women (members of the upper 400 I think they were named) feeding their lap-dogs, adorned with jewelled collars, off plates of gold. Elsewhere I have read and seen pictures of New York poor starving in the snows of winter.

There in brief is your problem and the problem of every civilised country of the Earth. The glutton, foul, menacing cities, the gorgeous few, the countless miserables ! And beyond the empty Land which could feed them all and give them health and happiness from the cradle to the grave.

The problem then is : the Poor *in* the Cities, and the answer to it should be, the Poor *on* the Land, where they would cease to be poor.

What are the bitter fruits of this City Life ? A confusion more complete than that which fell on the builders of the Tower of Babel ; a failure more utter ; a mere shattered mass of half-dried bricks which will be washed to shapelessness by the rains of heaven and crumbled to powder by its everlasting sun.

An ultimate dearth of Life : the woman who *will* not bear children on the one hand ; the woman who *may* not bear children on the other. A destruction : with a vision (for those who can see) of the East once more flowing in over the West and possessing it—and lo ! the toil and intellect of ages gone.

Such may be the will—the design of God. I do not know. Yet I think it more probable that it is the cracked coin in which He will repay the wickedness, or the mad folly of man.

Cannot this torrent be stayed or turned ? Here I see no hope of it : Yonder you may have a chance. Our existence as a race (I speak of all the white Nations) seems to me to depend upon the answer. If this letter were published in the Press to-day, I am aware it would be mocked at. But if it

could be read one short five hundred years hence, I wonder if the readers of that age would call me fool or prophet ?

Good luck to you ! In triumph or disaster God's blessing and peace on you who are striving for the truth and right.

Thus prays your friend,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

Here ends my Roosevelt correspondence up to the present time. If he survives me—which, being so strong, is more than probable—I do not think that he will be vexed with me for including what he wrote to me in my autobiography, seeing that it is in a sense all public matter and reveals his true character in the most favourable of lights.

How wrong, in my opinion, are those who so bitterly abuse Mr. Roosevelt ! I think him a noble-hearted and upright man who is striving for the good of humanity.

## CHAPTER XXI

### REPORT ON LABOUR COLONIES

Letter to Alfred Lyttelton—Interview with him—Opportunities of Conservative Government—How used—Nature of H. R. H's scheme—Approved by Earl Grey, Governor General of Canada—Cold reception by Government—Alfred Lyttelton a believer in it—Referred to a Departmental Committee—The bottom knocked out of it—Letters from Earl Grey—Letter from Bramwell Booth.

ON my homeward way across the Atlantic I wrote the following private letter to Mr. Lyttelton :

R M S *Majestic* : April 23, 1905.

DEAR MR. LYTTELTON,—I hope within a few days to let you have my Report, or rather Reports—for I have written a general Report and separate Remarks upon each of the Salvation Army Colonies.

I am glad to be able to tell you that on the whole, although mistakes have been made, I formed a favourable opinion of these colonies.

I am also thankful to be able to add that the results of my negotiations with the Canadian Government are, in my opinion, very satisfactory. They have *given* me 240,000 acres of land outright (to be selected *wherever one likes*) and a promise of as much more as is wanted. This is really very handsome. Up to the present, however, I have not been able to get their promise that they would join in guaranteeing a loan for Emigration purposes. Still Mr. Fielding was very well disposed towards so doing and promised that he would consult his colleagues and communicate with me further. I owe it to Lord Grey and Mr. Sifton that things went so smoothly in Canada. I cannot be grateful enough to them, as will be seen

from my Report. I was fortunate enough to be able to convince everybody I met there, from Sir Wilfrid Laurier down, that the scheme I have evolved is sound and workable—to the benefit of Canada also, so they all set to and helped me after reading my Report on the Colonies. (I had roughly drafted these Reports during my train journeys.—H. R. H.) Also I think that Sir Wilfrid was approached in a fortunate hour—just when he wished to do something for the Protestants.

At any rate when I took some opportunity to point out to him that the Salvation Army put no religious pressure on its settlers and that there were Roman Catholic families at Fort Romie, after thinking a moment, he answered formally :

' I think that no Public Body could be better fitted to carry out Land Settlements in Canada than is the Salvation Army.'

It seemed to me that this was holding out the hand of welcome.

The Report covers many documents that have to be checked and prepared for press, but I am pushing on with them as fast as possible, and if I am wanted a wire to Ditchingham will always find me.

I had a most interesting interview with President Roosevelt, of which I will bring or send the private notes.

Our journey was very long and arduous, and towards the end of it my daughter developed influenza in the train which, as I did not know what it was, frightened me. Also we had a great escape of being drowned in the Colorado River. However, I am glad to say we got through safely. Hoping that my Report and scheme may be thought satisfactory.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

Some weeks after my return I had a brief interview with Mr. Lyttelton at the House of Commons—it may have extended to half an hour, though I think it was less. He expressed himself delighted with the Report, which was in his hand. When I asked him if he was satisfied with my work, he replied, ' Satisfied ? I think it splendid,' adding, ' I wish the Prime Minister would

take it up. But *Arthur won't read it—you know Arthur won't read it!*'

I thought to myself then, and am still thinking, that this 'Arthur won't read it' was a summary of much of the action, or lack of action, of the Government of that day. Mr. Balfour, it has always seemed to me, during his ten years or so of unquestioned power, had the greatest opportunity which God has given to any Englishman of our generation. What exact use he made of it is not a matter upon which I am qualified to express a judgment. He and those who were in his counsel alone can answer that question! Yet, speaking as a mere member of the public, it does appear as though more might have been done. For instance, the House of Lords, which was, as it were, in his pocket, might have been reformed, thereby averting all the national dangers and terrible trouble which have ensued, and the final surrender to the threats of the Radical party, made more feeble, some may think, by the bold and whirling words with which it was preceded.

Again, a Redistribution of Seats Bill might have been passed—it was not impossible with such a majority—and thereby half the Irish difficulty obviated. Local taxation might have been equalised; something, as I for one urged continually, might have been done to better the conditions of the land and its inhabitants, and so forth. Even such a little matter as an urgently needed Copyright Bill was left for the Radicals to deal with as best they could in face of the opposition of the Labour party.

It does strike me that this Conservative Government never quite realised that the time had gone by when it was possible for a happy family party to philosophise at a round table, calling each other by their Christian names and sucking the sweets of

office from year to year, quite satisfied to meet any emergencies that might arise in a happy-go-lucky, hand-to-mouth fashion, and to proclaim in well-educated voices that, while *they* ruled, all was well with the world ; also that the questions which others thought urgent might be postponed—to a more convenient season. Session was added to session, and still they scoffed at the need of any constructive policy. Meanwhile the thunder-clouds banked up, and that strong and turbulent spirit, Mr. Chamberlain, growing impatient of this political lotus-eating, broke away and ran up a score off his own bat, which to this hour the Unionist party does not know whether to count in its total or to sponge from the board.

But, as was subsequently remarked about the very recent collapse of the resistance of the House of Lords before the threat of an influx of Radical peers (how long would they have remained Radical, one wonders ?), all this is ‘ancient history,’ and therefore scarce worthy of discussion. I think it was Mr. Balfour himself who made the remark, apparently with a view of stifling inquiry into what some people think an obscure and poor-spirited transaction. Surely it is better to die facing the foe and with one’s armour on than to pull it off and run away, only to be beaten to death with sticks afterwards by the enemy’s camp-followers, or taken prisoner, reclothed in your ermine and coronet, and mocked before the people. Lord Halsbury and his stalwarts for *my* money.

On the occasion of this small Imperial matter with which I was concerned I confess I did wish that Mr. Lyttelton could have spared me an hour or two in which to talk over its leading points with him, as, for instance, President Roosevelt found himself able to do in the midst of all the tumultuous ceremonies of

his inauguration. But there, perhaps, came the difference. Roosevelt was being inaugurated : his time was before him. The Conservative party was already a mere corpse galvanised into a semblance of its lost life, and, standing on the edge of an open grave, it pretended not to see, its pale eyes fixed upon those thunder-clouds which, after ten happy years, had become so very large and definite. Little wonder that 'Arthur wouldn't read' reports on matters dealing with the transference of our superabundant city poor to colonial settlements. Matters at home, affecting him much more nearly, left no time for reading. The affair undertaken in a moment of pressure or enthusiasm was already forgotten ; it became inconvenient to consider the arguments of individuals who suggested that something should be done which would involve the expenditure of thought, time, and money. Had I been told this at once a great deal of trouble might have been spared to everyone concerned. The Report might even have been suppressed altogether.

I am not for one moment arguing that the scheme I suggested was open to no objections. What was the problem ? Briefly, in what way more or less broken-down persons and their families could be moved from our cities on to colonial land, to their own benefit and without the nation incurring loss. It is a problem that as yet no one has been able to solve. I did offer a scheme that had a fair prospect of success. The money advanced by the Government was to be secured upon the settlers' lands, which lands have since that time doubled or trebled in value, as I foresaw that they would do. What I called the 'Waste Forces of Benevolence' were to look after the said settlers for nothing, subject to proper control—a task which the Salvation Army was quite ready to undertake. More-

over, with all its enormous experiences of emigration, as the Canadian authorities recognised, it was absolutely competent so to do. Yet bitter prejudice against the Salvation Army, often enough fostered by persons in religion who should know better, was one of the causes that brought the business to the ground.

Without going further into its details I repeat that the Canadian Government and statesmen approved this scheme, as did the Governor-General, Lord Grey. Also when it was published it met with an enormous amount of support from the Press of this country, as may be seen by anyone who cares to glance through the extracts from Press opinions of my Report which are printed at the end of '*The Poor and the Land*,' wherein it is republished. Here, then, at any rate was a foundation upon which others might build.

At first the Government seemed to take this view, but then followed a pause indicative of the evaporation of enthusiasm. Questions were asked in the House as to whether the Government intended to do anything. The thing became a nuisance to them, and at length it was announced that the matter would be referred to a Departmental Committee. My first intimation of this was at a public dinner in London, when a gentleman much mixed up in politics as a Conservative agent informed me that he had just been speaking to a Minister, who had told him that my Report was to be sent to a Committee which would 'knock the bottom out of it.' Then I knew that all was finished.

And yet, unless I most strangely misunderstood him, all the while Mr. Lyttelton was a believer in the plan. He was personally most kind to me, and I liked him very much. At that time also, as his private secretary informed me, he wished me to make another report upon the possibility of applying similar principles

to a scheme of land settlement at home ; indeed I was told that it was settled I should be asked to do so. I understand, however—though of course in this I may be mistaken—that the officials of the Board of Agriculture put a stop to this idea, as such an appointment would have interfered with the prerogative of their department. At any rate, opposition arose somewhere and it was dropped. The upshot was that the work was thrown away, if any good and earnest work ever is really thrown away.

The end of the matter may be briefly summarised. As was to be anticipated, 'the bottom was knocked out' of my scheme in the most satisfactory official way.

The Report of the Committee stated that—

Though we fully recognise the zeal and ability Mr. Rider Haggard has shown in making his investigations and preparing his Report, and trust that much good may be done indirectly by the ventilation of the suggestions that he has made, we regret to be obliged to say that we consider his scheme to be open to so many objections that, even if we were prepared to advocate colonisation in principle, we could not recommend that this particular scheme should be adopted. . . .

Moreover, we feel that there are serious objections to placing any such body as the Salvation Army in the position of managers of a colony dependent on money advanced by the Imperial Government. . . .

Perhaps on the details the Committee was right. Who am I that I should question its collective wisdom—even if it had been 'prepared to advocate colonisation in principle'? Yet I agree with Mr. Lyttelton in the remarks that he subsequently made to me, that the good that would have been done by the adoption of such a scheme would have infinitely outweighed its disadvantages and the possible, though improbable, money loss. However this may be, there the thing

ended. The somewhat nebulous recommendations of the Committee included 'a grant-in-aid' to 'be given by the Imperial Government to the Committee formed under the Unemployed Workmen Act, for the purpose of emigration.'

Or alternatively—

'That, in the event of that proposal being rejected, an annual grant-in-aid for the term of five years should be made to the Emigrants' Information Office, to be expended by them in the emigration of suitable persons to the British Colonies through such Emigration Societies as they may select. . . .'

These recommendations were dissented from by Mr. Herbert Samuel, the present Postmaster-General, and by Mr. H. Lambert, and qualified in a Note added to the Report by my late friend Mr. Wilson-Fox, whose premature death has been such a loss to the public service of this country.

It is needless to add that, so far, the Report of this Committee has proved perfectly abortive. A strong man, such as Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was in his prime, might have adopted the outline of my ideas and made something of them. But the strong man was lacking, and to send them to a hybrid Committee of mixed views was only to ensure their murder. It is always so easy to find fault and make objections.

For me personally this issue was painful. I had worked hard and in all honesty, and, like many better men, I had found myself thrown over. After all the Colonial Secretary's declarations as to the value of my work, etc., I never even received a letter of thanks from the Government, or, for the matter of that, a copy of the Report and Evidence of the Committee, which I had to buy like any other member of the public. All that I got was the privilege of paying the bill, for

of course the small sum allowed by the Rhodes Trustees did not suffice to meet the expenses of my tour in a high official position through that very expensive country, the United States.

Thus my mission ended.

In confirmation of what I have stated above I will now quote a few of the more important letters which I wrote or received as a Special Commissioner.

The first of these was addressed by me to Lord Rosebery as Chairman of the Rhodes Trust.

*Confidential.*

DITCHINGHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK :  
May 20, 1905.

MY LORD,—You may know that I am the person who was sent to investigate the Salvation Army Colonies in America. I write therefore thinking that perhaps you would wish to hear from me in the matter.

First, however, as one who has for years taken deep interest in the problem of the congested cities and the depopulated land, I desire most heartily to thank the Rhodes Trustees for their action in having set this investigation on foot.

Very briefly the results are as follows :

On the whole I was well satisfied with the Colonies, perceiving in them a great principle, easy of adaptation.

I proceeded to Canada and showed to various members of the Government there my draft reports. Also I explained to them my scheme.

I am glad to be able to say that I was successful in impressing upon them that this scheme is quite sound. Mr. Sifton (a great power there) even went further and stated that he considered it of more importance to the Dominion than any plan of preferential duties.

The issue is that I have brought home with me a despatch from Sir Wilfrid Laurier granting three hundred and sixty square miles of their best land for the purposes of the scheme,

promising as much more as may be required, and stating his firm belief in the practical nature of my scheme. . . .

I speak with reference to Canada and other Colonies. On the home side of the question, where dear land and awful rates and District Councils have to be faced, I am not so sure. I have offered to go into and prepare a further report on this point if it is desired.

I have ventured to suggest that a Commissioner should be sent to South Africa and especially to Rhodesia, to examine those Colonies and see what they are prepared to do to help. I have great hope that the tobacco industry in Rhodesia gives an opening to the small holder. I think also that your Lordship will agree with me that a British population is desirable in that country.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERRY, K.G., etc. etc.

As a result of this letter I had a long interview with Lord Rosebery in the course of which we discussed the whole matter in detail. It was the only occasion upon which I have ever met this remarkable personage. As he wandered up and down his library and talked of this and that, he impressed me as a melancholy and disappointed man—one who, in a sense, felt that he had failed, notwithstanding his brilliant gifts and great opportunities. His fine nature peeped out in every sentence that he uttered; also his disillusionment. I suggested that he should move in this matter in the House of Lords; but he did not bring the matter up there, as a Departmental Committee was appointed.

Truly the appointment of that Committee was wise from the point of view of those who wished to put an end to further agitation on the subject.

I also received the following letters from Earl Grey :

TORONTO : May 20, 1905.

MY DEAR RIDER HAGGARD,—I am delighted to get your letter which encourages me to hope that the Colonial Office is in earnest in this matter. As you know, I agree entirely with you that there is no time to lose—Roosevelt will be glad to blanket our sails if we give him an opportunity. My impression is that if the Home Government were to refer your Report to the Canadian Government with a request for an expression of their opinion as to the practicability of your recommendations *qua* Canada and ask for a statement of what they will do in the matter, it would provide just the stimulus required to enable the Dominion Government to do something this Session.

The Department of the Interior, with whom the initiation of action rests, has been necessarily handicapped by a change of Minister and the election at Edmonton. The new Minister has hardly had time to get himself fairly into the saddle. My impression is that the Government here, if properly approached, will follow Fielding's lead—this of course quite private to yourself.

Yours sincerely,

GREY.

So far as I am aware, the Home Government never 'approached' that of Canada in the matter.

CASCAPEDIA CLUB, GRAND CASCAPEDIA,  
QUEBEC, CANADA : July 4, 1905.

MY DEAR RIDER HAGGARD,—Your report has just reached me on the banks of the Cascapedia, and I hasten to acknowledge its receipt.

The life here is not conducive to writing, so I will not try to say much.

I fear the Canadian Par<sup>t</sup> which is now preparing itself for Prorogation, will not be able to consider the question seriously this Session—but I will write to Fielding on the subject.

I do not notice in the Blue Book Mark Hanna's Bill, and I regret its absence, as it gives a lead and shows the way.

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I hope the British Public will be able to seize the salient points. If they can by aid of the Press be persuaded to assimilate them something ought to result from your visit to the States.

Forgive more at present.

Yours very truly,  
GREY.

I appreciate your generous reference to myself.

I received many letters from Mr. Bramwell Booth, the present General of the Salvation Army, of which I will quote one.

TONBRIDGE : *August 3, 1906.*

DEAR MR. HAGGARD,—The General desires me to thank you for your note and telegram, both sent on to him. We are travelling. He desires me to express to you at once in this informal way his high sense of the important service you have rendered to the community by your investigations in the U.S. and in Canada, and to say that he has read y' Report with the greatest interest. No doubt he will have the opportunity of saying all this and more to you before very long.

The General feels much disappointed by the inaction of the Government, and does not quite understand the line they take. If, as you suggest, they wish to dispense with the service of voluntary agencies it appears to him that they will be quite impotent in this matter. At the same time he sees great difficulty in arranging any combined action with other organisations such as you name, seeing that, so far as we know, there are no English Societies having any experience worth talking of, with whom we could combine. And as you know nothing is more futile, or more *dangerous*, than advising people to advance money on purely speculative proposals.

I have asked Booth-Tucker to send you a copy of a letter from Bernard Holland from which it appears that the Committee desire us to give evidence to *prove* that men taken from our cities will settle successfully in the prairie of Canada ! Now we shall be very reluctant to attempt such proof, even if we may feel strongly that the work could be done. It seems to

us scarcely reasonable. Moreover evidence w<sup>d</sup> have to be sought in *Canada*, and considerable expense w<sup>d</sup> be incurred. It w<sup>d</sup> appear that in some way there is a wish to set up y<sup>r</sup> Report in order to shoot at it! That is hardly what you, or we, were led to expect. However, I expect to be in Town on Friday and will consider what can be done. The matter is so important that we must not unduly hurry it.

My own feeling is that Gov<sup>t</sup> has really ceased any serious intention in this matter—they are practically in a state of suspended animation.

I must see you. The General does not expect to be in London until the end of this motor campaign—Sept. 9th.

Very f'fully,

W. BRAMWELL BOOTH.

H. RIDER HAGGARD, Esq.

There is a mass of further documentary evidence on this question, but probably the above samples will suffice to explain everything with sufficient clearness. Such letters are valuable records which cannot alter or gloze the truth. I have only to add that old General Booth was personally very indignant about the treatment which my Report received—so indignant that he refused to appear to give evidence before the Committee. Indeed his people would not allow him to do so, because they said they were sure that he would lose his temper. More than once he declared to me in his fierce way that, from knowledge in his possession, he was well aware that the appointment of this Committee was 'a put-up job.' He and the late Mr. Wilson-Fox used to travel up to town together in the mornings, and I imagine that from him he extracted a good deal of information. Also he had other means of getting at the truth, for the Salvation Army has many friends in high places and among the various parties.

That is all I have to say about this fiasco. My Report was destroyed; the divided recommendations

of the Departmental Committee, such as they were, were never acted on : in short, all came to nothing. Meanwhile the problem remains as pressing as ever it was. Our cities are still crowded with thousands of children utterly without prospects, except such as are afforded by the hospital, the poorhouse, and the gaol, some of whom, if a scheme analogous to mine had been adopted, might become healthy, happy and prosperous on the bountiful land of Canada, and this at little or no cost to the Mother Country and to the great gain of the Dominion. On the other hand, the emigration agencies are still busily employed in picking out the healthy young men and women reared and educated at our expense from the already depopulated country districts. By thousands these depart, to return no more, leaving the land of their birth the poorer for their loss. One night some years ago I addressed five or six hundred of them in the board room of Euston Station, while they were waiting for a special train to Liverpool, and thought the sight and the occasion extremely sad. But so it is, and so I suppose it will go on—the devouring cities growing more and more bloated, and the starved land becoming more and more empty.

Well, I tried my best to help in the matter and failed. Whether the fault was mine or that of others I must leave the reader to judge upon the evidence before him.

## CHAPTER XXII

### ROYAL COMMISSION ON COAST EROSION AND AFFORESTATION

Operation in Nursing Home—‘Ayesha’—H. R. H. often asked which he thinks best passages in his works An answer to the question—Member of Royal Commission on Coast Erosion—Lloyd George—Afforestation added to the reference—Scheme presented to Government—Dropped—King Edward’s funeral—H. R. H. undertook a report for Salvation Army—Regeneration General William Booth—His death—H. R. H. wrote pamphlet for Archbishop Benson—‘Rural Denmark’—The Development Board—Notes of interview with Lloyd George Knighthood conferred—Offered seat on Dominions Royal Commission—Egypt again—‘Marie’—Dedicated to Sir Henry Bulwer—End of Chronicle of H. R. H.

IN the intervals of all this Commission business I retired for a month or five weeks into a nursing home to undergo an operation which the effects of my long journey made necessary

Never shall I forget that place!—the lodging-house-like little drawing-room where patients were received, and where I had to wait in my dressing-gown while my room was made ready for the operation; the dreadful noise caused by the carriages of theatre-goers returning home at night or by the rattle of the mail-carts over the stone-paved road; the continual operations; the occasional rush of the nurses when it was announced that a patient was passing away; and so forth.

I had never taken a major anaesthetic before, and I must say I did not find the process pleasant. I can still see the face of my friend Dr. Lyne Stivens, and the jovial, rubicund countenance of the late Professor

Rose, bending over me as through a mist, both grown so strangely solemn, and feel the grip of my hand tightening upon that of the nurse which afterwards it proved almost impossible to free.

Then came the whirling pit and the blackness. I suppose that it was like death, only I hope that death is not quite so dark !

From this blackness I awoke in a state of utter intoxication to find the nurses of the establishment gathered round me with sheets of paper and the familiar, hateful autograph books in which, even in that place and hour, they insisted I should write. Heaven knows what I set down therein : I imagine they must have been foolish words, which mayhap one day will be brought up against me.

Another question : Why cannot the public authorities establish really suitable nursing homes for paying patients ? This would be a great boon to thousands, and, I should imagine, self-supporting.

However, of one of these nurses at any rate, a widow, I have grateful recollections. I amused myself, and, I trust, her, by reading '*Ayesha*' aloud to her during my long wakeful hours—for she was a night nurse.

This book '*Ayesha*', which was published while I was in the nursing home, is a sequel to '*She*', which, in obedience to my original plan, I had deliberately waited for twenty years to write. As is almost always the case, it suffered somewhat from this fact, at any rate at the hands of those critics with whom it is an article of faith to declare that no sequel can be good. Still, I have met and heard from many people who like '*Ayesha*' better than they do '*She*'.

Lang was very doubtful about this book. He wrote :

You may think me a hound, but I only found out as I went to bed last night that 'Ayesha' was in the drawing-room. Awfully good of you to make me such a nice dedication, grammar right too, which I name because in a very jolly book *également dédié* to me the grammar is wrong, but I could not point that out to the author.

I am almost afraid to read 'She,' as at 61,00000 one has no longer the joyous credulity of forty, and even *your* imagination is out of the fifth form. However, plenty of boys are about, and I hope they will be victims of the enchantress. . . .

I was therefore correspondingly relieved, believing as I do that Lang's judgment on imaginative fiction was the soundest of any man of his time, and knowing his habit of declaring the faith that was in him without fear, favour, or prejudice, when on the following day I received another note in which he said :

It is all right : I am Thrilled: so much obliged. I thought I was too Old, but the Eternal Boy is still on the job. Unluckily I think the dam reviewers never were boys—most of them the Editor's nieces. May it be done into Thibetan. Dolmen business in Chapter I all right !

I have often been asked, and have been careful never to answer the question, as to what I considered the best passages in my own humble writings. It is a very favourite query of the casual correspondent, from whom I receive, on an average, a letter a day, and sometimes many, many more. Now in acknowledgment of them all I reply—Ignosi's chant in 'King Solomon's Mines,' as it appears in the later editions of that book (the same that Stevenson called 'a very noble imitation'); the somewhat similar chant to the Sun in 'Allan Quatermain'; the scene where Eric Brighteyes finds his mother dead—which Lang declared was 'as good as Homer'—and the subsequent fight in the hall at Middlehof; the description of the wolves

springing up at the dead body in the cave in 'Nada the Lily'; the transformation in the chapter called 'The Change' and 'The Loosing of the Powers' in 'Ayesha'; a speech made by the heroine Mameena as she dies, in an unpublished work called 'Child of Storm,' with the rest of her death scene; the account of the passion of John and Jess as they swung together wrapt in each other's arms in the sinking waggon on the waters of the flooded Vaal; and, oh! I know not what besides. When one has written some fifty books the memory is scarce equal to the task of searching for plums amidst the dough. Also when one has found them, they seem on consideration to be but poor plums at best. Also one thinks differently of their relative merits or demerits at different times. For instance, how about 'She's' speech before she enters the fire? and the holding of the stair by old Umslopogaas? and the escape of the ship in 'Fair Margaret'? or the battle of Crécy in 'Red Eve'? If I am asked what book of mine I think the best as a whole, I answer that one, yet unpublished, to my mind is the most artistic. At any rate, to some extent, it satisfies my literary conscience. It is the book named 'Child of Storm,' to which I have alluded above, and is a chapter in the history of 'Allan Quatermain.' Of Allan, for obvious reasons, I can always write, and of Zulus, whose true inwardness I understand by the light of Nature, I can always write, and—well, the result pleases at least one reader—myself. Whether it will please others is a different matter.

So, at last I have tried to answer the inquiries of the all-pervading casual correspondent in a somewhat superficial fashion. To do so thoroughly would involve weeks of reading of much that I now forget.

When I escaped from that nursing home, very

feeble and with much-shattered nerves, I went to stay with my friend Lyne Stivens to recuperate, and thence for a day or two to Kipling's. Here I remember we compounded the plot of 'The Ghost Kings' together, writing down our ideas in alternate sentences upon the same sheet of foolscap.

Among my pleasantest recollections during the last few years are those of my visits to the Kiplings, and one that they paid me here, during which we discussed everything in heaven above and earth beneath. It is, I think, good for a man of rather solitary habits now and again to have the opportunity of familiar converse with a brilliant and creative mind. Also we do not fidget each other. Thus only last year Kipling informed me that he could work as well when I was sitting in the room as though he were alone, whereas generally the presence of another person while he was writing would drive him almost mad. He added that he supposed the explanation to be that we were both of a trade, and I dare say he is right. I imagine, however, that sympathy has much to do with the matter.

Of late years Kipling has been much attacked, a fate with which I was once most familiar, since at one time or the other it overtakes the majority of those who have met with any measure of literary, or indeed of other success—unless they happen to be Scotchmen, when they are sure of enthusiastic support from their compatriots always and everywhere. The English, it seems to me, lack this clan feeling, and are generally prepared to rend each other to pieces in all walks of life, perhaps because our race is of such mixed origin. In Kipling's case some of these onslaughts are doubtless provoked by his strong party feeling and pronouncements, though the form they take is for the most part criticism of his work. Even on the supposition that



KOST, BORGORI, FLOWERS, CHARLES, DIOCESE OF HANOI  
IN THE FOREST, 1960



this is not always of quite the same quality, such treatment strikes me as ungenerous. No man is continually at his best, and the writer of 'Recessional' and other noble and beautiful things should be spared these scourgings. However, I have no doubt it will all come right in the end, and I hope that when this book is published he may be wearing the Order of Merit.

Nowadays everything is in extremes, and the over-praised of one year are the over-depreciated of the next, since, as much or more than most people, critics, or the papers that employ them, like to be in the fashion. It is fortunate that, however much it may be influenced at the time, the ultimate judgment lies in the mouth of the general public, which, in the issue, is for the most part just. It is fortunate also that only a man's best work will come before this final court, since in our crowded age the rest must soon evaporate.

The next important event that happened to me was my nomination in the year 1906 as a member of the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion. It happened thus. Seeing that such a Commission was to be appointed, I wrote to Mr. Lloyd George, who was then the President of the Board of Trade in the new Radical Government, explaining to him a method I had adopted of keeping back the sea by the planting of Marram grass. This plan had proved most successful so far as the frontage of my house, Kessingland Grange, near Lowestoft, was concerned, and I suggested that it might with advantage be more widely followed.

Mr. Lloyd George asked me to come to see him, which I did, with the result that ultimately I found myself a member of the Royal Commission whereof Lord Ashby St. Ledgers, then Mr. Ivor Guest, was the

Chairman. Lord Ashby St. Ledgers was at the time quite a young man whom I liked very much, and with whom I got on extremely well ; indeed he was always most kind and considerate to me. So far he has been extraordinarily fortunate in life, and I hope that his good chance may continue. Born to great wealth, while still young he finds himself a member of the Government, a Privy Councillor, and a peer in his own right without the necessity of waiting for his father's title. Truly the ball is at his feet and, with his considerable business abilities, he should be able to kick it far, as I hope he may.

How strangely do the lots of men vary, especially in this old-established land ! One toils all his life to attain in old age, or more probably not to attain at all, what another steps into from the beginning as a natural right and almost without effort on his part. One man misfortune follows fast and follows faster ; another seems to pass from childhood to a very distant grave without a heartache or a stumble ; neither he nor those connected with him are called upon to face work, or want, or struggle, or to know any kind of human loss or suffering or anxiety of the soul—that is, so far as we can judge.

Almost am I inclined to think that the Prince Fortunatus of this character, of whom everybody will know several, must have behaved himself very well in a previous incarnation and now be reaping the harvest of reward. Or maybe—this is a more unpleasant idea—his good things are appointed to him here like those of Dives in the Bible, and—there are breakers ahead. Unless the world is regulated by pure chance, there must be some explanation of these startling differences of fate. Or perhaps the fortunate ones have their own bitternesses which are invisible to other eyes.

Well, one may speculate on such problems, but to do the work that comes to one's hand thoroughly, to thank God for and be content with what one has and to envy no man—these are the only real recipes for such satisfaction and happiness as are allowed to us in our mortal pilgrimage. Such, at least, is my attitude, though I must say I agree with Disraeli that life has more to offer to those who begin it with £3000 a year, and with Becky Sharp who remarked sagely that in these circumstances it was easier to be virtuous !

I worked hard on that Royal Commission. During the five years of its life, indeed, I only missed one day's sitting, and that was because the steamer from Denmark could not get me there in time. Shortly after the commencement of its labours I was nominated the Chairman of the Unemployed Labour and Reclamation Committee, which involved a good deal of extra, but important and interesting, business. Also I was the Chairman of two of the tours that were made by committees of the Commission to inspect the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland, during which tours I am glad to say there were no differences of opinion or other troubles, such as have been known to arise on similar occasions.

When we had been sitting about a year, finding that there was not really very much in the Coast Erosion business, which had been somewhat exaggerated, Lord Ashby St. Ledgers and I approached Mr. Lloyd George one night at a dinner party and suggested that, as had been originally proposed, the question of Afforestation should be added to our Reference. This was done, and some experts in the matter were appointed to the Commission. After this we investigated that great subject with much zeal and, being pressed by the Government, presented an interim Report. It was

drafted, with the assistance of course of our clever and industrious secretary, Mr. Grimshaw, of the Board of Trade, by the Chairman, Professor Somerville, and myself, *quorum pars magna fuit* my extremely able and learned friend, Professor Somerville. We presented a scheme for the consideration of the Government, under which, had it been adopted, enormous areas of waste or poor land in the United Kingdom would in due course have become forests of great value. Needless to say it was *not* adopted ; its fate was the fate of my Land Settlement Report, minus the appointment of a Committee to 'knock the bottom out of it.' The fact is that the venture was too sound and quiet to be undertaken by a Government of party men who look for immediate political reward rather than to the welfare of the country forty or fifty years hence, especially when, as was likewise the case in my Land Settlement Report, the immediate finding of large sums of money is involved.

Also the inevitable critics arose. Gentlemen who thought that they ought to have been on the Commission, gentlemen who thought that they ought to have been called as witnesses, gentlemen who honestly disagreed, shouted aloud in the accustomed chorus, and in the end the thing was practically dropped. Which is a pity, for it would have worked well in the long run and proved of great benefit to the United Kingdom in those coming days when the timber supplies of the world will run short. Also it would have given a great deal of employment on land which now uses but little labour. However, I did not feel its failure in the same way as I had felt that of my one-man Report, since now I shared the responsibility with about a score of distinguished persons who had unanimously made our futile recommendations to the Crown. It was one

more piece of, to all appearances, wasted work, that was all. I must say I do not wonder that many officials become slack and remain well content to do as little as they can, seeing what are the results which overtake those ardent spirits who show themselves guilty of *trop de zéle*. Cold shoulders and rapped knuckles, these are their portion.

After the funeral of our Afforestation scheme we proceeded to examine more coasts. I wonder if there is a groin or an eroded beach on the shores of the United Kingdom that I have not seen and thoughtfully considered. Amongst other places we went to Ireland, where, as the Chairman of the Committee, I examined all the southern coasts of that beauteous isle; also a fine variety of inland swamps which it was thought possible to reclaim.

It was a very interesting experience because of the number and different classes of people with whom we came in contact as we journeyed from place to place in motor-cars.

I found the Irish the most charming and attractive people that I have ever met and the most incomprehensible. What rather disgusted me, however, was the mendicant attitude of mind which again and again I observed among those who gave evidence before us. They all wanted something out of the Government, and generally something for nothing. I remember growing enraged with one witness, a most shameless beggar, and saying to him, 'The fact is, sir, that after the British Government has given you the horse, you expect that they should feed it also.'

'Shure, your Honour!' he answered, quite unperturbed, or words to that effect.

As I was dressing one morning at a Cork hotel, I received a telegram informing me that King Edward

Booth sent an officer to me to ask if I would write a report upon the social efforts and institutions of the Salvation Army, for which it would be prepared to pay a fee, to be arranged. I answered that I had no time, and that in any case I would not touch their money. Ultimately, however, I made the time and undertook the task as a labour of love, on the condition that they should pay the out-of-pocket expenses. It took me about three months in all, including the travelling to various cities in England and Scotland, and as a result I published my book, 'Regeneration,' of the copyright of which I made the Army a present. I do not suppose that this has proved a valuable gift, as, to find a large sale, such books must be of the ultra-'sensational' order, which mine was not.

I saw much of human misery in the course of that business, in which I was assisted by my friend, Mr. D. R. Daniel, one of the secretaries of the Royal Commission. But all of this is recorded in the pages of the book, so I need not dwell upon it here. I emerged from this work with a most whole-hearted admiration for the Salvation Army and its splendid, self-sacrificing labours among the lowest of the low. Its success with these, where so many have failed, remains something of a mystery to my mind, which I can only explain by a belief that it is aided through the agency of the Power above us. Nothing else will account for the transformations it effects in the natures of utterly degraded men and women. Long may it endure and prosper!

I have known General Booth for many years; my first interview with him, one of great interest, is printed verbatim in 'Rural England.' We were always the best of friends, perhaps because I was never afraid of him, as seemed to be the case with so many of those by whom he was surrounded, and was always ready to

give him a Roland for his Oliver in the way of what is known as chaff. I have seen him under sundry conditions, of which, perhaps, the funniest was the following. One day, after he had been holding a great meeting for City men in London, at which I was present, I took a gentleman to visit him who I thought might be able to help his cause. We found him at his office in Queen Victoria Street, stripped to his red Salvation jersey, streaming with perspiration, and very cross because his tea, or whatever the meal was called, was not ready. He was calling out, officers were flying here and there, some one was trying to soothe him, and so on. At length the meal arrived, consisting of a huge dish of mushrooms and a pot of strong tea. Contemplating this combination of fungi and tannin, I remarked that never before had I understood the height and depth and breadth of his faith in the heavenly protection.

This reminds me of a story which Captain Wright, a member of the Salvation Army who acted as one of my secretaries in America, told me of the General's peculiar diet. Wright was travelling with him when he was tearing round the States preaching in the great cities. At that time his fancy was to eat two boiled Spanish onions before he went to rest, and it was Wright's business to see that those onions were there. One unlucky night, however, after a particularly exhausting meeting they arrived at the hotel, where all the attendants had gone to bed, to find two very massive onions reposing on the plate as usual, but just as they had left, not the saucepan, but their mother earth !

Of the row that ensued the captain spoke to me in the hushed voice of awe.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General Booth said to me—more than once ‘ Ah ! but you would look *grand* in my uniform.’ Whereto I would reply quite truly that I was not fit to wear that wedding garment, or words to that effect.—H. R. H:

The old General wrote as follows about my book, 'Regeneration.' The letter is a very good specimen of his fine, bold handwriting, although at that time his sight was already feeble.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS,  
LONDON, E.C. December 10, 1910.

MY DEAR RIDER HAGGARD,—I have just read 'Regeneration.' It is admirable. You have not only seen into the character and purpose of the work we are trying to do, with the insight of a true genius, but with the sympathy of a big and generous soul. From my heart I thank you.

May the blessing of the living God rest upon you, and on Mrs. Haggard and on your daughters, both for this life and the life to come.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

WILLIAM BOOTH.

RIDER HAGGARD, Esq., J.P.

On May 20, 1912, the General wrote to me, saying that he was to undergo at once an operation for cataract on his remaining eye, one being already blind.

The signature to this touching letter, written just before his last illness, for death followed on the heels of that operation, is somewhat irregular, for then he was practically blind, but still in the old firm handwriting. Three months later to the day he died, and I received the following telegram, dated 21st August :

With deepest sorrow I have to announce the General laid down his sword at 10.15 last night. Pray for us.

BRAMWELL BOOTH.

So William Booth passed away. If there is any reward elsewhere for the deeds of good men, his should be great. Here on earth he has built himself a monument of thousands of regenerated hearts. Why, I wonder, was burial in Westminster Abbey not offered

for his remains? I suppose the answer is—because he did not belong to the Church of England. Yet if the Abbey can open its ancient doors to those who amused many of the people—eminent actors, for instance—it seems hard that these should be closed to one who saved so many of the people, and in all lands.

The book ‘Regeneration’ was extremely well reviewed by scores of papers, both here and in other countries, especially in America; thus I remember *The Times* gave it a leading article. I only saw two indifferent notices of it—in Church of England journals—and these were aimed more at the Salvation Army than at the work itself.

In my time I have done one or two little pieces of writing for somewhat similar objects. Thus many years ago I was responsible for a pamphlet called ‘Church and State,’ which I composed in defence of the Established Church of Wales that was then, as now, threatened with disendowment. This was undertaken at the request of the late Edward Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury, who wrote to me at some length in August 1894, giving me the various points on which he thought stress should be laid.

The pamphlet was written in due course and approved of by the Archbishop, who wrote to me in November of the same year:

I must give you my most cordial thanks—in the name of all interested—and they are Legion—for your admirable and telling paper. It is presumptuous in me to use epithets. . . . We are all very grateful to you.

I never spoke to Archbishop Benson, although I often saw him at the Athenæum. Indeed one night we dined next to each other at separate tables and alone. I remember that I was tempted to address

him, for he did not know me by face, but, remembering that busy men seldom like to be troubled at their rest by strangers, I refrained. So the opportunity went by, for which I am sorry, as I should have liked to make the personal acquaintance of this good and very earnest prelate.

I have always thought that he was most happy in the manner of his death, which took place suddenly while he was at prayer. Such would be the end that I should choose, if choice lay within our power.

Another task that I undertook in the intervals of my Royal Commission was an agricultural investigation which resulted in my book 'Rural Denmark,' whereof a new edition is just about to appear. What I saw in that country was to me little less than a revelation, but I need not dwell on it in these pages. Here I found the answer to the problem which had puzzled me for so many years —namely, how agriculture could be made to pay in a Free Trade country with an indifferent climate. That answer undoubtedly is: By means of medium or small holdings, for the most part owned and not rented, aided by universal co-operation, which will only flourish in the absence of too many large farmers, and by a system akin to that which is known as credit-banks. Thus supported, the soil of Denmark, which is on the whole poorer than our own and afflicted with an even worse climate, manages out of its small extent, equal only to that of Scotland, to export over twenty millions sterling worth of agricultural produce, chiefly to the British Isles, in addition to the amount which it keeps at home for sustenance in a densely populated land.

What Denmark does most undoubtedly the United Kingdom could do, though perhaps with some variation in the actual products. This, however, will not,

I think, happen under that aftermath of feudalism, our present system of hired farms, many of which are larger than the tenant can manage, and, as a consequence, indifferently cultivated. Nor will co-operation on a large scale arise under these circumstances. Owners with no landlord to run to *must* co-operate in self-protection ; tenants, and especially large tenants, do not do so.

I was anxious to serve on the Development Board, in the interests of Afforestation, and also I felt that it had its roots, or at any rate some of them, planted in the soil of my book 'Rural England.'

Here I will insert a note that I made of a conversation which took place between Mr. Lloyd George and myself in May 1909, which throws a good deal of light upon this matter.

SUMMARY OF MY CONVERSATION WITH MR. LLOYD GEORGE  
ON MAY 11, 1909.

(*Made from notes taken on the same morning.*)

On Friday the 7th of May I met Mr. Lloyd George in Parliament Street. He said he 'must see me,' and after some conversation asked me to breakfast on the following Tuesday.

I began by putting the case for the adoption of our Afforestation scheme as forcibly as I could, arguing that Afforestation should be placed in the hands of a Permanent Royal Commission.

The Chancellor's answer amounted to this : That he was most anxious to see our Afforestation plan go through on whatever scale could be arranged. He told me that this was very largely, if not chiefly, because I had personally succeeded in interesting him much in the matter when we met and stayed together at Carrow Abbey last year. The advocates of Afforestation were, he considered, very fortunate in having to deal with *him*, since he was sure that no Chancellor who went

before him, and none who were in the least likely to follow after him, would listen to them for a moment. As it was he had but one earnest supporter in this matter in the Cabinet—Winston Churchill.

I suggested John Burns also, inasmuch as the Labour party were all in favour of an Afforestation scheme.

He replied: No, at heart Burns was not in favour of it, and for the reason that the Labour party were. He added that J. B. was 'thoroughly wrong' with the Labour party.

In Parliament, Mr. Lloyd George continued, this party was the only one from which he received any support as to Afforestation. Although they had seemed to be in favour of it a few months ago, and even keen for it, the rest of the Liberal party now appeared to care nothing for it, while the Unionists of course were hostile on principle; also because they feared it would interfere with sport.

All these considerations made the matter difficult for him. Also there was another. In the Parliamentary war over the Budget the money necessary might easily be cut off.

I then passed on to the question of a permanent Royal Commission.

He said he did not see how it could be managed for Afforestation alone, but that it might be for the purposes of the administration of the Development Grant as a whole. Personally he was entirely adverse to the passing over of that Grant into the power of any official Department.

I replied that one permanent Royal Commission to deal with the whole Development Grant would quite meet my ideas, provided that Afforestation was adequately represented thereon.

I asked how many he would have on the Commission. He replied he feared that it must be a large one, as he supposed it would be necessary to put on representatives of the various Public Offices.

A discussion then ensued as to who would be the best Chairman for the Development Board or Commission. We talked over various names that seemed to fulfil the qualifications he considered necessary, namely, that this Chairman should be a man of rank and wealth if possible. As regards

this point he said that there was some force in the criticism that the proposed Development Board might possibly become a tool of party or other subtle form of corruption, and even descend to the perpetration of jobs.

I suggested that the way to avoid this would be to put on it none but men of the highest character who were known to be impartial and open-minded and who were generally respected by the country. He agreed.

The names suggested for the Chairmanship, so far as I remember, were Lord Desborough, Sir Herbert Maxwell, and Lords Milner and Curzon (these two by myself). Lord Curzon, he thought, would bring a great deal of dignity to the office, but too much of the 'viceregal manner.' Milner's name he favoured, but finally seemed to conclude that he was in a sense too strong a man, who with his charming manner would invariably in the end get his own way, which might not always be the right way, and carry the Commission with him. Finally after a pause I suggested Lord Rosebery.

'Rosebery'! he said, sitting down and thinking. 'Rosebery! the very man! Politically detached, universally known, beyond suspicion, and a master of the subject. The very man—that's a stroke of genius of yours—if he will serve.'

I then said I thought there ought to be a Vice-Chairman also, to which he seemed to assent. I mentioned further that being much interested in all these subjects, I should like to serve on that Commission if it were ever formed. He nodded and raised no objection to this, but how much or how little that may mean I do not know.

When I bade him good-bye he was sending a secretary over to the Prime Minister to ask at what time he could see him that morning, in order, I understood, to discuss the whole matter.

The general impression left upon my mind is that Mr. Lloyd George means to put this business through if he can, but owing to the great forces, secret and open, ranged against him and it, that he is not quite certain of his ability to do so.

On Christmas Day, 1909, I received a letter from Lord Ashby St. Ledgers, my Chairman, in which he said :

I had a conversation yesterday with Lloyd George, and he intimated that he intended to offer you a post as Commissioner under the Development Board.

I told him it was slave-driving not to offer you a salary with it, but he said that his limit of £3000 per annum had not enabled him yet to secure a permanent official, and that it would involve an amendment of the Act to provide anything for anyone else.

He spoke of Dick Cavendish for Chairman, and Horace Plunkett and an Irishman for the other two.

Then he goes on to talk of Afforestation in connection with the proposed Board.

I should explain here that although if a salary had come my way I should not have refused it, considering the time and work involved, money was *not* my object in wishing to serve on this Board. That, as I subsequently informed Mr. Lloyd George, I should have been glad to do for nothing as a piece of public duty.

Afterwards, by his direction, an interview took place at the Ritz Hotel between Lord Ashby St. Ledgers, on behalf of the Government, Lord Richard Cavendish, and myself, at which we discussed the whole policy of the future administration of the Act.

It might now have been thought that this matter was settled, but again there proved to be many a slip, etc.

In order to put an end to the attacks Lloyd George went to Mr. Walter Long, who was leading the Opposition on the Unionist side, offering to knock off one name—I believe it was that of my friend and colleague, Professor Somerville, though of this I am not sure—but saying ‘I must have Rider Haggard.’ To this Mr. Long agreed, and the matter was then adjourned to the following night—I think the last of the session. Again the trouble began, and Sir Frederick Banbury,

either throwing over or not knowing of the arrangement with Mr. Long, threatened to stop the whole thing, once more in a thin House, unless the number of Commissioners was reduced to eight. So, as my name was the last on the list, for all the others had been announced, it was struck off to prevent the hanging-up till after the adjournment of the Amendments Act, which I think was being rediscussed upon its return from the House of Lords.

Thus it came about that I, who directly and indirectly had played a considerable part in connection with this beneficent measure, was prevented from having any share in its administration.

The Royal Commission on Coast Erosion and Afforestation came to its end at last when we signed a Report that was practically unanimous, save for one or two reservations, of which I drafted all that portion that has to do with Reclamation. I believe that our recommendations, which contain nothing very startling, are to be made the subject of an Act of Parliament at some future date.

I made some good friends upon that Commission, notably that charming and able geologist, Professor Jehu (to whom I dedicated my tale 'Red Eve'), who was my constant companion during those five years, and dear old Sir William Ffolkes, now gone from among us.

I missed that Commission very much, since its sittings took me to London from time to time, and gave me a change of mental occupation and interests. Indeed I do not remember ever being more consistently depressed than I was during the first part of the following winter. Here, as I no longer shoot, I had nothing to do, except the daily grind of romance-writing, relieved only by Bench business, my farm

affairs, and an afternoon walk through the mud with the two spaniels, Bustle and Jeekie, and a chat after church on Sunday upon the affairs of the nation with my fellow-churchwarden, friend and neighbour, Mr. Carr, the squire of this place. Also bronchitis, which had threatened me for some years, troubled me much. I thought that I had shaken it off, but caught it again during a cold snap, staying at a Cambridge college, whither I went to address a large meeting upon the possibility of establishing agricultural training institutions upon the Danish model. So I returned here, enjoyed the bronchitis, and began to write this autobiography, for really it seemed as though everything had come to an end.

Then of a sudden things changed, as they have a way of doing in life. Thus one morning about Christmas-time I found amongst my correspondence a communication from the Prime Minister informing me that the King had been pleased to confer a knighthood upon me. I had often thought and said that I did not think I should care to be knighted. Indeed when a year or two before it was suggested to me through a semi-official channel on behalf of a very powerful Minister, that if I wished for a baronetcy it might perhaps be arranged, I said at once, and firmly, that I did not. Baronetcies are for rich men who have male heirs, not for persons like myself.

However, I took the knighthood when it was definitely offered, on the ground that it is a mistake to refuse anything in this world ; also that a title is useful in the public service, and especially so abroad. Moreover, it was Recognition, for which I felt grateful ; for who is there that does not appreciate recognition particularly after long years of, I hope, disinterested toil ?

A week or so after the announcement of my honour, on January 11, 1912, the post brought me another interesting and more important letter, from which I will quote one or two passages.

COLONIAL OFFICE : *January 10, 1912.*

DEAR MR. HAGGARD,—You are probably aware that at the Imperial Conference of last year it was decided to appoint a Royal Commission to visit the various Dominions and report upon them. I enclose a copy of the Resolution of the Conference and another of the suggested Terms of Reference. You will notice that the Fiscal Question is carefully excluded from the purview of the Commission. The inquiry will probably extend over three years, though it will not occupy anything like the whole of that time, and it will entail three visits to the Dominions—one of three months to Canada and Newfoundland, another of three months to South Africa, and another of six months to Australia and New Zealand. These visits will take place in different years and will not be continuous. Of course, following the precedent of all other Royal Commissions there will be no remuneration for the Commissioners [then follow details as to travelling allowance, etc.]. There is to be one Commissioner for each of the five Dominions and six British Commissioners. Lord Inchcape is to be the Chairman, and the Prime Minister and I are very anxious to try to induce you to be one of the British Commissioners. . . .

Yours very truly,  
L. HAROURT.

In a subsequent letter Mr. Harcourt wrote :

I greatly hope that you will be able to accept, and I trust for the sake of the reading public that the Commission will not prevent you from pursuing a good deal of your usual avocations, and might even incidentally provide materials !

I need scarcely say that to my mind this was recognition—with a vengeance. Charles Longman remarked when I told him the news, at which he was

delighted, 'I would rather have heard this than that they had given you a peerage. Anyone can be a peer, but to be one of the six men chosen to represent the United Kingdom on a great Empire inquiry of this sort is a real honour.'

I agree with him, especially as I have no wish to be a peer. Also to me the compliment seemed the more marked for the reason that it was paid to an individual who first became known to the public as a writer of romantic literature, an occupation that does not dispose the British nation to take those who follow it seriously. Now I saw that all my long years of toil in investigating and attempting to solve the grave problems which lie at the root of the welfare of our country had not been without effect upon the minds of its rulers, and I felt proportionately grateful and honoured.

Of course the acceptance of this Royal Commissionership involves serious sacrifices in my case, exclusive of that of long separation from my family. Thus it will necessitate the partial shutting down of my home here; and how I am to carry on my literary work in the intervals of so much public labour, really I do not know! I felt, as did my wife, and still feel that such considerations should not be allowed to interfere with the execution of what I look upon as a high and honourable duty.

Subsequently I had a long interview with Mr. Harcourt, in the course of which we discussed matters connected with the Commission and other things. He struck me as a singularly able and agreeable man, quite unlike his father, Sir William Harcourt, whom also I used to know, and yet in a way resembling him. It seems an odd thing to say, but I thought the tone of his mind very conservative, and before I left him

found myself wondering how it came about that one who is so very much an English gentleman, in the old and best sense of the word, and an aristocrat, finds it easy to rub political shoulders with certain members of the present Radical party, who hate English gentlemen and aristocrats.

The same remark applies to Sir Edward Grey and to some others. I suppose the truth is that nowadays those who elect to lie down between the somewhat gamey party blankets must expect queer bedfellows. One wonders which set in the end will thrust the other out of that uneasy couch. Though the mass of the congregation may change, most of us continue to worship in the Church into which we were baptised—yes, even if its priests from time to time give new renderings to some of the ancient doctrines. That is human nature, and the simile suggests a key to the puzzle.

Before leaving the subject of my new appointment, I may mention a curious little circumstance in connection with this Dominions Royal Commission.

The notice of the first meeting informed me that it was to sit in a room, numbered so-and-so, at the great public building known as Scotland House. When I arrived there at the appointed time I asked the porter, who is an old friend of mine, which that room might be.

'Why, sir,' he said, 'the same in which you have been sitting for years.'

So there I found myself in that identical chamber, with the identical noise from the Embankment outside, and the identical electric fan creaking away over the door. But, here came the difference: everybody in it was changed, down to the messenger boy, and none of those gathered there even knew a single

creature with whom I had been associated in that place for so long a period of time. It was like arising from the dead into the midst of a new generation. For a few minutes it made me feel very lonely as I looked up to find fresh faces in place of the old familiar ones that now were gone, two of them for ever. Nor was this sensation lessened when, in an adjoining office, I saw the unclaimed despatch-box of one of my former colleagues who is dead.

In the beginning of the present year I paid another visit to Egypt in the hope of shaking off my bronchitis, which I did—until I got back to England, a country in which I am rather doubtful whether I shall ever be able to winter again. On this occasion my daughter Angela and I examined the mummy of the Pharaoh Menepkah, which Sir Gaston Maspero kindly caused to be removed to a private room for our inspection. It was a strange thing to look upon the tall form and the withered countenance of the man who is generally believed to have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus, that majesty before whom, perhaps, Moses stood, and to think that that frozen countenance—it is a very impressive countenance still—may have trembled and sunk in at the announcement of the judgments of the great God of the Israelites. One thing is clear, however : he was not drowned ; nor, indeed, does the Bible state that this happened. Menepkah died in old age from ossification of the arteries ; there still lies the lime about the heart of Pharaoh—which it pleased God to harden !

Many question the whole Exodus story because there is no mention of it in the contemporary Egyptian records. Personally, however, I believe it to be true in its main outlines, and that a large body of Semites did break away from Egypt about this period, although

it did not suit the official scribes to make any mention of the event with its very unpleasant happenings. One day I hope to write a romance of the time, hence my particular interest in Menepkah and in his son and heir, Seti II.

On my return to England I set to work to write a romance in the new Allan Quatermain series. The first of these books, 'Marie,' which is dedicated to my old chief, Sir Henry Bulwer, has, I am glad to say, been much liked by its readers and, up to the present, proved successful. Of course, however, when I speak of success, I mean on the moderate scale to which I can hope to attain.

No doubt, however, by degrees as a writer I shall be put upon the shelf, for that is the lot of all or nearly all of us when we grow old. I cannot look forward to any prosperous period in my old age, which, should I chance to live so long, it seems to me probable enough I shall be called upon to pass in a very modest way. As, however, I have been able to provide well for any who may come after me, at this I do not grumble in the least. I have earned a good average income as an author during many years, and perhaps I ought to have saved more. But investments are apt to turn out badly when the investor has no time to attend to them; moreover, as I think I said I have discovered, it is certainly true that man does not 'live to himself alone.' There are plenty of those who claim to share in whatever he may earn. The owner of any fixed property in our part of rural England is, in fact, nothing but a distributor. In wages, taxes, and subscriptions he hands out nearly all that he receives, except, of course, the worries, the losses, 'the clamorous and almost savage demands for money that come by every post, and the various official forms that he is required

to fill in. These too often are all his portion, and therefore it is that I have determined to sell every acre of our outlying lands if they will reach to a very moderate reserve figure on the open market.

And now 'I have spoken !' as the Zulus say. I fear that these volumes are somewhat egotistical in their contents and tone, but how can that be helped ? An autobiography which did not treat at length of the person concerned would be but an apple dumpling without the apple.

There is much more that I might have said. For instance, I, who am now preparing to start upon a great journey to the Antipodes, have found neither the time nor the courage even to look through my letters received during the last ten or twelve years. I have dealt simply with those salient points that occurred to me and hunted, not always with success, for such documents as might bear upon them. Thus, a very amusing and perhaps an interesting chapter might be composed out of the correspondence which I have received from writers who are personally unknown to me. Should I live and find time, strength, and opportunity, I may add another volume to this record descriptive of my impressions of the British Empire, the greater portion of which I am about to visit. But who knows the future and its gifts ?

'So ends the chronicle of Henry Rider Haggard—a lover of the kindly race of men, a lover of children, a lover of his friends (and no hater of his enemies), a lover of flowers, a lover of the land and of all creatures that dwell thereon, but most of all, perhaps, a lover of his country, which, with heart and soul and strength, he has tried to serve to the best of his small powers and opportunities. May every blessing be on her—

every success to her arms by land and sea, and every splendour on her ancient name, during the troublous times that are to come ! Yes, and all confusion to any of her sons who, for selfish ends, would drag her down to wreck ! Such is his earnest prayer !

Thus then, poor sinner though I am, trustfully as a wearied child that, at the coming of the night, creeps to its mother's knee, do I commit my spirit to the comfort of those Everlasting Arms that were and are its support through all the fears of earth and, as I believe, have nursed it from of old !

One boon, from infancy to age, has been showered upon me in a strange abundance, pressed down and running over—the uncountable, peculiar treasure of every degree and form of human love, which love alone, present or departed, has made my life worth living.

But if it is all to cease and be forgotten at the borders of the grave, then life is *not* worth living. Such, however, is no faith of mine.

Farewell !

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

DITCHINGHAM :

*September 25, 1912.*

## CHAPTER XXIII

### A NOTE ON RELIGION

*S.S. Arcadia, December 16, 1912. (Off Aden.)*

IT has occurred to me that the views on the matter of religion of a person of my day with such experiences as this work records may prove of interest to some of those who come after me, and possibly, here and there, of help. So I add them to this book as a footnote which none need read unless they wish.

First I should state that I am not a theologian. Theology is a science that has no attraction for me. In this great question of our future life or death I find no place for subtleties in which many take so much delight. Such is the constitution of my mind. The fine divisions of a creed, the bitterness that rages between High Church and Low, for instance, awake in my heart neither sympathy nor echo. What are vestments or ritual when eternal life or death and salvation are at stake? Even the great gulf fixed between Anglican and Roman Catholic is to me narrow. I was bred, and doubtless shall to the end remain, a member of the Church of England. But, on the other hand, I have a great admiration for many parts of the Roman precept and practice. Its discipline seems to me beyond praise; the support it gives to the individual struggling and affrighted soul shows deep understanding of the eternal needs of human nature;

while who can, be blind to the abnegation of self evinced in the practice of celibacy by its devoted priesthood, resulting, as it does, in an enormous gain to its efficiency as a Church ?

Further, within limits that I need not discuss, personally I think the virtue of Confession which it inculcates great, since thereby is brought the whole weight, wisdom, and merit of the Church to the aid of the particular case. I am aware that Confession is allowed to Anglicans and even, in a sense, enjoined upon them. But by how many is the rite employed ? And why is it not employed ? The question may be answered by another. Who wishes to make confessions of his failings—to lay bare that wonderful and sometimes awful thing, the secret soul of man, to Mrs. Rector or Mrs. Archdeacon, or even to a selection of the father confessor's brother priests ? It may be retorted, not without indignation, that such a thing would not happen. Perhaps. Yet the average man feels a risk which he will not face. Many of us have known worthy but much married clergymen whose conjugal confidences are famous. In consequence, rightly or wrongly, other confidences are withheld from them, and with the abolition of a one-doctrined, properly controlled, responsible and non-amateur celibate priesthood, Confession has gone out of fashion. This, however, is by the way.

The trouble about the Roman Church is not only its notorious intolerance and bigotry, of which history tells, but the fact that some of the doctrines, as I understand them, are not to be found in the New Testament, which after all is the Christian's only charter. Since the Scriptures are of no private interpretation what is not written there is, so far as they are concerned, presumably non-existent. It is this

truth that keeps so many from the gates of Rome. Perhaps in some day to come she will modify her attitude in certain directions, as we may modify ours, and the two greatest divisions of the Church of Christ will draw together again. I trust and pray that this may be so and that thus an united front may be presented to the evil that is in the world, which lessens little, if at all, with the passage of the ages.

In the same way that I admire and respect the Roman Church do I admire and respect a Body which stands at the other religious pole—I refer to the Salvation Army. But this Body, splendid as is its work, makes what I consider the mistake of omitting the use of the Sacraments which seem to me to be clearly enjoined by the New Testament. As the Roman Church elaborates the sum total of the corpus of our faith, so the Salvation Army deducts from that sum. But it has been explained to me that the late General Booth did this of set purpose, because he did not think that the people with whom he had to deal understood the Sacraments.

I do but quote these two extremes, however, each of which I think so admirable in its own fashion, as evidence of the statement with which I opened these remarks, to the effect that whatever I may or may not be, I am no bigot. Now I will try to show why I believe in the simple and unadulterated doctrines of Christianity as these appear within the four corners of the New Testament and are preached by the Church to which I belong.

There are, of course, many varieties of what is known as Faith. There is, for instance, the unquestioning Faith which many profess because it is *there*, because they inherited or were taught it in childhood. Such persons have looked and need to look no further.

Theirs not to reason why, and they are fortunate and happy in this attitude.

Others have a more difficult experience. When the intellect awakes it begins to question, and often enough finds no satisfactory answer. It becomes aware that all these divine events happened a long while ago, also that the evidence for them is not of a nature that forces conviction *per se*, at any rate at first sight. For instance, no judge would send an accused person to gaol on the testimony which, for some purpose beyond our ken, has been considered sufficiently strong to enable mankind to accept a very wonderful story and to build thereon the hope or rather the certainties of redemption and eternal life beyond the chances and changes of this mortality. Some are thereby entirely discouraged and, rejecting what they conclude must be a fable, set themselves sadly to make the best of things as they are, awaiting the end with resignation, with terror, or with the callous indifference of despair, according to their individual temperaments. Others start out on wild searches of their own. They examine the remaining religions, they try spiritualism, they bring themselves, or so imagine, into some faint and uncertain touch with the dead, the Unseen and the Powers that dwell therein, only after all to return unsatisfied, unsettled, hungry—frightened also at times—and doubtful of the true source of their vision. For in all these far seas they can find no sure, anchored rock on which to stand and defy the storms of Fate. Those alien religions may suit and even be sufficient to the salvation of their born votaries, but to these philosophical inquirers they are not sufficient. Moreover, they find that Christianity embodies whatever is true and good in every one of them, rejecting only the false and the evil. To take but one example, all,

or very nearly all, of the beautiful rules and maxims of Buddha are to be found in the teaching of our Lord. But there is this difference between the faiths they preached. Whereas that of Buddha, as I understand it, is a religion of Death, holding up cessation of mundane lives and ultimate extinction as the great reward of virtue, Christianity is a religion of Life, of continued individual being, full, glorious, sinless and eternal, to be won by those who choose to accept the revelation of its Founder. Who then can hesitate between the two ? Who wishes to be absorbed into the awful peace of Nothingness ? Why, such, without its precedent preparation, was the refuge of the Roman who opened his veins when things went wrong or Caesar frowned !

Thus it comes about that these seekers after spiritual truth remain drifting to and fro in their little boats of hope, that grow at length so frail and old, and mayhap in the end founder altogether.

Or perhaps they turn in despair and, aware of the overwhelming importance, of the awfulness of the issue indeed, to which all other things are as naught, face the situation afresh, study afresh, think afresh, pray afresh, perchance for years and years. If so, there is really only one work with which they need trouble themselves, the New Testament, and parts of the Old such as the Psalms. At least that is my experience—the experience of a plain man in search of truth.

I suppose that for the last fifteen or twenty years, except very occasionally through accident or a sense of unworthiness, scarcely a day has gone over my head on which I have not once (the last thing at night) and often more than once, read a portion of the Bible. The result is that now I find it fresher, stronger, more convincing, more full of hidden meaning than I did when I began this exercise. ‘Search the Scriptures’

was a very great and potent saying, for in them I think is life.

What, it may be asked, do you find there, beyond picturesque narrative and the expression of hopes natural to the hearts of members of a race that in a few short years must throb itself to silence ? I answer that in all their *main* facts they are *true*. I have been accustomed to write fiction for a space of nearly a whole generation, and I know something of the business. Having this experience at my back I declare earnestly that, with a single exception, I do not think it possible that the gospels and the rest can be the work of man's imagination. That exception is the Book of Revelation, which might possibly have been conceived by some noble human mind in a wonderful period of spiritual exaltation. I hasten to add that I am certain this was not the case ; that on the contrary it was divinely inspired, whatever the actual meaning of parts of it may be. All I say is that, in my view, it alone of the books of the New Testament *might* perhaps be a fruit of human powers of creation.

With the remainder of them it is different. These, I am sure, are records of things that were said or happened very much as they are written down. Who, for instance, could have invented the account of the Last Supper in St. John ? A thousand touches, patent enough to the eye of one who composes romance, show that this view is true ; the very inconsistencies or variations in the different accounts of certain incidents, due for the most part to the varying temperaments of the recorders that cause them to dwell upon that aspect of the matter in hand which appealed to them, rejecting or slurring over the others, suggest that it is true. Any person who has been accustomed to hear evidence knows that such evidence is most suspicious

when a number of witnesses tell *exactly* the same story, especially as to events that happened a while before, and most credible when that story comes from sundry mouths with differences of detail.

So, the critic will say, you are prepared to swallow the miracles at a gulp ? Yes, I am—or most of them. I do not see how they are to be explained away ; moreover, I have known so many miracles to occur in my own time and experience that a few more or less make no difference to me. To state that miracles, which after all may be but the partial manifestation of some secret law veiled from us as yet, have ceased is, in my opinion, a profound mistake ; they happen often, especially in the heart of man. Moreover, the whole circumstances of life are a miracle ; the wireless instrument that at this moment I hear doing its wondrous work is a miracle ; we are surrounded by miracles, unappreciated, unvalued, because so common. This, though a truism, is one from which we may argue.

I believe, therefore, that these things took place substantially as they are recorded ; that a God-endowed Being of supernatural strength did show signs and wonders before the eyes of His generation, and for the subsequent instruction of mankind. If this is not true, or rather, if the greatest of these signs is not true, then Christianity falls to the ground ; it is a well dug in sand that will hold no water, and what tens of millions have believed and believe to be a gateway to a better and enduring world is but a glorious morning cloud which melts away and is lost in the vastness of the ether. Then, as St. Paul says, we are of all men the most miserable ; then let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die ; then let us see to it, so far as is possible, that we bring none here to bear the burden of the years and know the despairing bitterness of death.

Needless to say, I refer to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. If He never rose from the grave, then, so far as I can see, there is no hope for Christian man, and we trust in a vain thing. I say, so far as I can see, for there may exist other roads of salvation with which we are unacquainted. For my part, I believe, however, that He did rise, as firmly as I believe that at this moment of writing I am sitting on the deck of a ship called the *Arcadia*, and that what He, born of woman, did, we shall do also.

Indeed this may be a convenient place to state my private opinion (it is no more, though I cannot find that it conflicts with the doctrines of Christianity ; see, for instance, the passage in which our Lord refers to Elijah as having returned to earth in the person of John the Baptist), to the effect that we, or at any rate that some of us, already have individually gone through this process of coming into active Being and departing out of Being more than once—perhaps very often indeed—though not necessarily in this world with which we are acquainted. In short, like the Buddhists, I am strongly inclined to believe that the Personality which animates each of us is immeasurably ancient, having been forged in many fires, and that, as its past is immeasurable, so will its future be. This is in some ways an uncomfortable faith or instinct ; thus I, for one, have no wish to live again upon our earth. Moreover, it is utterly insusceptible of proof—like everything else that has to do with the spirit—for vague memories, affinities with certain lands and races, irresistible attractions and repulsions, at times amounting in the former case to intimacies of the soul (among members of the same sex, for in discussing such matters it is perhaps better to exclude the other) so strong that they appear to be already well established, such as

have drawn me so close to certain friends, and notably to one friend recently departed, are none of them proof. Nor are the revelations of persons who seem to have access to certain stores of knowledge denied to most men, for these may be anything or nothing. Nor is that strong conviction of immemorial age which haunts the hearts of some of us.

No, there is no proof, and yet reason comes to the support of these imaginings. Unless we have lived before, or the grotesque incongruities of life are to be explained in some way unknown to us, our present existence, to my mind, resembles nothing so much as a handful of what is known as 'printer's pie' cast together at hazard and struck off for the reader to interpret as he will or can. Or perhaps in this case a better example would be to compare the world to a great ball-room wherein a Puck-like Death acts as Master of Ceremonies. Here the highly born, the gifted and the successful are welcomed with shouts of praise, while the plain, the poorly dressed, the halt, are trodden underfoot; here partners, chosen at hazard, often enough seem to be dancing to a different time and step, till they are snatched asunder to meet no more; here one by one the revellers of all degrees are touched upon the shoulder by the Puck-like Death who calls the tune, and drop down, down into an impenetrable darkness, while others who knew them not are called to take their places.

But if we admit that every one of these has lived before and danced in other rooms, and will live again and dance in other rooms, then meaning informs the meaningless. Then those casual meetings and swift farewells, those loves and hatings, are not of chance; then those partners are *not* chosen at hazard after all. Then the dancers who in turn must swoon away beneath

that awful, mocking touch, do not drop into darkness but into some new well of the water of Life. Then what we behold is but a few threads, apparently so tangled, that go to weave the Sphinx's seamless veil, or some stupendous tapestry that enwraps the whole Universe of Creation which, when seen at last, will picture forth the Truth in all its splendour, and with it the wondrous story and the meaning of our lives.

Such, put shortly and figuratively, seems to me one of the strongest arguments for the continuity of our personal existence through various phases. It may be, however, that it is no argument at all—that there is some other explanation (beyond that of blind, black, brutal chance), perhaps so simple that we cannot grasp it, which accounts for everything.

One contention, however, I find it hard to accept—namely, that man appearing here for the first time through an accident of the flesh is placed and judged eternally in accordance with his deeds of at most about thirty waking, conscious years (even if his life be long), for childhood and the time spent in sleep must be excluded. To me such a thing is almost incredible. Final judgment I can understand after many lives of growing towards the good or towards the ill—and, indeed, the faith I follow declares it—but not an eternity of anything decreed on the deeds of ten or twenty or thirty years passed among the surroundings in which we happened to be born, weighted with the infirmities and inherited tendencies of a flesh and nature that we did not choose. Over a great period of many different existences, selected according to the elective fitness of the *ego*, matters and opportunities would equalise themselves, and that *ego* would follow the path it selected to its inevitable end. But one life of a maximum of thirty years full-stopped with doom . . . !

All this, however, is a digression from my arguments to which I now return.

I have said that I believe in the truth of the New Testament story, and that to my mind everything hinges upon the fact of the Resurrection, although I am aware that many who call themselves Christians, and expect, apparently, to receive whatever benefits Christianity can bring, give no credence to this or any other miracle. Surely these might as well expect to inherit salvation by virtue of a study of the doctrines of Confucius. I hope that they will inherit it all the same, since God, who knows what is in man and the clay whereof we are fashioned, is merciful, and there may be, and probably are, many roads to the gate of Life ; but in this case it can scarcely be reached by the faint and wandering path of a materialised and eviscerated Christianity. Christianity as an effective creed depends, and always must depend, upon the Resurrection of its Founder while He dwelt on earth. Or so I hold.

How, then, is this necessary faith to be attained by those who doubt ? Perhaps in many ways, though I only know of one—namely, by prayer. It is, at any rate in its higher forms, a *gift* accorded in answer to prayer ; it is an inspiration of the Spirit of our Maker which flows down the connecting links of prayer. By prayer, too, I do not mean a few hurried or formal mumblings in the morning or at bedtime : I mean the continual, almost the hourly, conversation of the creature with his God. I mean the habitual uplifting of the heart to heaven, the constant cry of fallen nature in sorrow, in joy, in sin, in every circumstance of life, to the Highest of all natures, who remembers of what metal it is made because in the beginning (ah ! what beginning ?) it was from Him and is still His own.

Feeble, unworthy though it be, such prayer offered on our own behalf or on that of others, I am sure is heard, is answered across the unutterable spaces—or so it has often seemed to me—if put up in faith. Sometimes even, for a little while it causes us to understand what is meant by the peace of God that passes understanding. Further, it is as necessary to the sin-stained soul as is food to the frail body. For indeed even those among us, with whom such as I cannot presume to rank ourselves, are full of faults and must appear to the Perfect Eye as though stricken with a moral leprosy. Our only hope, knowing and remembering these faults, however oft and bitterly repented of, is to say like the man in the temple, ‘Lord, I am a miserable sinner’; to seek for the help we cannot give to ourselves, to crave that we too may be sprinkled with the atoning Blood. Why this should be necessary I cannot say—for who can comprehend these wonders?—any more than I can understand the origin and meanings of sin, which often enough seems to consist merely in giving obedience to the imperious demands of that body with which we have been clothed. The gratification of these impulses generally becomes sin, because Nature has no laws except her own, and her ancient rule is not that revealed by Christ in the latter days.

So it is with almost everything: even true affection or any other virtue exaggerated can turn to vice. It would seem as though man’s trials here were purposely made as hard as may be; so hard that at times we may perhaps be forgiven if we wonder whether this world, at any rate for some, is not in truth one of the chambers of the house of hell, or at least of that purgatory preached—so far as I know without warrant—as a doctrine of the Roman faith. By prayer, then, we can be purged and helped, prayer for ourselves,

prayer for others, for the living, yes, and for the dead ; for who will dare to say that even the dead are beyond the reach of benefit from our feeble crying in the night to the Ruler of that night ? Prayer, I repeat, is heard ; prayer, if it be directed to lawful ends, is answered sometimes when it seems to be made most in vain. If only we had faith enough no right thing would be refused to us. Who knows the harvest that we sow by means of earnest, faithful prayer, and, though its seed lie buried for a season, shall one day reap ? But most of all, I think, should we pray for knowledge how to pray !

Now the road to this goal of faith, which must be found and kept open by prayer, still remains full of obstacles and apt to vanish quite away, leaving the weary wanderer in a desert where no water is. Light fails, dark grows the sky, again and yet again cold winds of doubt freeze him to the marrow, sins overtake and conquer him, voices mock him from the gloom. They bid him look back to the warm world he left upon his foolish quest to find a star whither no path leads that mortal can follow. They point to the bones of those who have fallen by the way. They whisper that his error lies in not taking what he may have while there is still time, since soon he must go empty to the sleep which knows no waking. Poor fare perhaps, they say, yet better than feeding upon wind and bedewing the altar of a heedless or non-existent God with repentant tears because of half-imaginary sins begotten by a nature the sinner did not shape.

What traveller of the sort is there who has not been thrown back upon his thorny journey by such thoughts as these ? Or perhaps some hideous and cruel loss has caused him to doubt whether, after all, any Power does exist that knows the name of pity or can thrill with the

glow of love. Or the shock may take other forms. He may find that those whom he thought to be inspired from on high with goodness are merely stupid ; that they avoid conspicuous and open error because their slow natures are shut to temptations of the larger sort, though they breed a growth of petty mischiefs not textually named among the Ten Commandments and therefore, say they, of no account. Or that some friend whom he respects and has leant on, perhaps a clergyman of standing, after all believes in little, and though he practises its forms has reduced Christianity to the level of high and pure philosophy enunciated by an unfortunate, self-denying young Jew of genius with whom the established Church of the period very well knew how to deal. Or it may be a brilliant but materialistic book that he chances on, wherein he finds all the points upon which he has been accustomed to rely very cleverly attacked. Or some great doctor may disturb him by showing forth the origin of all such aspirations as those of faith written in the human nerves and brain. Or, to take only one more example, he may after all find it impossible to reconcile the fact of the existence of a good and merciful God with the state of affairs he sees existing in the world. A common and effective trap, this, for generous and hasty minds.

I think that I have fallen over all these stumbling-blocks, and others, in the course of my life, which has set me wondering why they should be so many. At length, after long pondering, I have answered the question to my own satisfaction, though probably enough the reply which suffices me will make some readers smile. It is simple ; five words cover it. 'The Devil put them there.'

Yes, I have come back to a belief in the old scriptural Satan, now so generally discarded, though be it

remembered that our Lord was perfectly definite on the point of his existence—so definite, indeed, that it is scarcely logical to believe in the one without believing in the other. Fear not those who kill the body and then have done all that they can do, but fear him who after death has power to cast into Gehenna, He says, and many like things that cannot be misread.

Whoso considers the world and the horrible things that happen here, things to wring tears from the eyes, yes, and blood from every honest heart that can understand, must feel that for some reason which is hidden from us it exists under a dual government—that of the divine Power of Good, which we know as God, and that of the infernal Power of Ill, which we call Evil and personify as the Devil or Satan. I will take one instance from a multitude: it will serve as a type of what I mean—the presence amongst us of the hideous traffic in souls and bodies, worse by far than that of the man-sellers of all ages, known as the White Slave trade, which, I may add, is another stumbling-block to faith for us who cannot see an inch before our feet and guess not the end thereof. It is obvious—I say it with all reverence—that the Holy One, and Christ who is a part of Him, would not permit such an ineffable horror to exist if it could be ended with a blow. Therefore reason, which after all is, I presume, some guide and index to the causes and comparative values of such phenomena as we can apprehend, teaches us that it and all abominations of the sort must have their spring in the workings of a rival Strength whose delight is in misery, the breath of whose nostrils is human and perhaps superhuman shame and ruin, whose shield is fraud, whose wine is tears, whose armour is the flesh and its fierce lusts, and whose sword is death.

For a while to this fiend are given a throne upon

the world and dominion over the hearts of men, and strait, strait is the gate whereby we can escape from his defended kingdom. He it is who—knowing the priceless worth of each human soul, that, if it can win redemption from his befouling, murderous hand, may, we are told, grow to be a judge of angels and as great or greater than are those Flames of Fire, the Ministers of God our Father—busies himself by night and day, from childhood to the grave, in setting snares in the narrow path to catch the feet of men and drag them down to doom.

Such at least is an article of my creed. Nor, now that I have reached to it, can I find therein any point of difference between it and what the Saviour taught. There was a time, indeed, when I did not credit the existence of an embodied evil. To-day I have learned otherwise. For in truth all these avenues of experience, search and thought, after many circuitous journeyings and expeditions into nothingness, have just led me back to the eternal verities that I was taught at my mother's knee, at some of which, such as the efficacy of prayer (though through it all, from habit or from hope, I never ceased to pray) and the actual existence of this our Arch-Enemy, to my shame be it said, I was wont to shrug my shoulders, if not to scoff. Yes, these wings of prayer which once I thought as fanciful as those of angels in the cottage pictures, have borne me to a frail pinnacle of the temple of my trembling soul, whence at times, very faint and far away, across the gulf of our mortality, I seem to catch some glimpse of the Holy Mount and of the veiled and throbbing Glory that broods thereon. A vain fancy of the striving heart, the reader will perhaps declare, and it may be so, though I pray that it is not.

There would seem also to be some external evidence

which goes to support the doctrine of the continuance of the personality beyond the changes of death. Spiritualism I do not include, since although many people, some of them of great intellect and high character, believe in it, and I know well that whatever it may be it is not all fraud, however much it may be mixed with fraud, I am by no means satisfied as to the real origin of its phenomena. Without expressing any definite opinion, at times I incline to the view that it also is but a device of the Devil, by specious apparitions and the exhibition of an uncanny knowledge which may be one of his attributes, to lead heart-sick mortals into regions they were not meant to travel and there infect them with the microbe of some alien, unknown sin.

On one point, however, I am clear. Whether or no it is lawful for trained and scientific minds to enter on these dangerous investigations in the interests of a search for some truth which it *may* be intended, in the fulness of time shall be revealed for the guidance and benefit of the world, the majority of men and women, especially if they be young, will do well to leave them quite alone. The risks are too many, and the fruits of such research, however golden they may seem, are apt to be unsatisfying, if not deadly. The parable of Eve and the forbidden apple of the Tree of Knowledge, from the eating of which came death and sorrow, still has applications in these latter days. Once I tried to point this moral in a tale I wrote which is named 'Stella Fregelius.'

Nor can we rely too much upon the revelations of such seers as Swedenborg, for these may be and doubtless often are self-deceived or the victims of hallucination. In short, of all such matters and dogmas, if so they may be called, including that of theosophy

with its interesting and gigantic dreams reported to emanate from the teaching of 'Masters' whose address it seems impossible to discover, it may be said that, like that of reincarnation, they are superfluous. The Christian can afford to wait to learn the truth of them—or perhaps their fallacy.

We tread on firmer ground when we consider that as far back as history shows her light, and beyond it as the graves of primitive peoples prove, the almost universal instinct of mankind was to believe that death is but a gate of other forms of continued and individual Life. I know of no instinct which haunts breathing creatures that is uselessly given without purpose, and does not serve some necessary or protective object or reflect some existent truth. Why, then, among them all should this rooted conviction that physical decease is not the end of man be but a vain thing fondly imagined? Such a conclusion seems inconsistent, even unnatural and absurd. But if our faith is strong enough to enable us to accept Christ's teaching, again what need is there for us to seek support in instincts which it is possible we do not understand aright?

To one fact, corroborative in its nature, I think, however, weight should be given, that of the fatherhood of God, displayed towards those of His children who seek, or who in His foresight He knows, in some other day or place, will seek the comfort and protection of His love. How any reflecting man who has led a full and adventurous life can doubt the present, living power of that fatherhood passes my understanding! Certainly I cannot. When we rode the wild horses of our youthful sins, the red blood coursing through our veins like wine, who was it that seized the reins and again and yet again delivered us from the last disaster?

Who is it that has so often protected us from the results of our own self-willed folly and even turned it to our advantage? Who that by His gift of a higher hope has stilled the raging agony of our griefs? Who that by the unexpected answers springing at us from the Bible's written page or with some word spoken, apparently at hazard, by one of His servants upon earth, has removed our doubts, enlightened our darkness and strengthened our wavering soul? Who that has shown us a way of escape from sharp temptation? Or, amongst a thousand other examples, who that has borne with our presumptuous profanities and ingratitude and at last in His own good hour has set our erring feet upon the paths of peace? Or, to take one more example, who was it that by a dream and a vision of the night taught me that His humbler creatures are my kin and not called to life to be slaughtered for my pleasure, even though some of them must die to serve my necessities? Yet again, who twice has snatched me by the hair from the murderer's spears and bullets, twice from death in the deep, and from a score of other perils, perchance that I might live on to bear this witness, unworthy though it be?

I have spoken of this fatherhood as a fact corroborative in its nature of the truth of the arguments which I have so feebly attempted to advance with reference to the immortality of our souls. For this reason. Even among the lowest of us fatherhood implies love. The fathers are few who desire that even their erring and unthankful children should die and vanish from their sight for ever, and much less that these should live on in suffering for all uncounted time. Can we then for one instant imagine that the Architect and Author of the universe, the Supreme, the Absolute, He who was and is and shall be, He whose Holy Name is

Love, the Begetter of Spirits and of men, desires that His children should be tormented, or die and not endure, redeemed and purified, to adore and serve Him ? Not so ! Not for this does He count the sparrows that fall and number the very hairs upon our heads. In His cup is the wine of life—if we will but drink—not the henbane of death eternal. He is the God of the living, not of the dead. Did not the Saviour say it that we might know and believe ?

And if your reasonings are sound, if what you say is true, the reader may ask, if the righteous are redeemed and live to look upon the Presence to all infinities, still what hope is there for *you* who are not righteous, who are but a common flesh-stained sinner ? As I shall not then be here to answer I will strive to answer now, praying for grace that I may do so aright. With utter humility, in true unfeigned abasement of heart and spirit I will answer. Was there not one Mary Magdalene out of whom Christ cast seven devils ? Was there not a woman taken in adultery whom He refused to judge ? Did He not declare that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth ? Did He not bid those that were heavy-laden to come to Him and taste of rest ? Therefore it is that millions such as I, men who in the course of life have erred deeply in some things and fallen short in many, may still dare to hope. Also who are the righteous ? Even St. Paul speaks of the war within him. Is it not written that there are no righteous on this side of the grave—none nearly perfect ? They would not be human if they were. All, even deans and bishops, or some of them, have need of grace. Surely it is the attitude and strivings of the caged spirit that will be considered, not the shortcomings of the gaoler body, the desire not the deeds, for if it prove otherwise who

can escape when the heart is weighed in the balance ? To my mind the great sin is not to seek forgiveness for sins—not to try to avoid them in the future. All stumble into the mire, but of those who elect to wallow there and of those who deliberately refuse the saving hand that is stretched out to them, what can be said ? Well, perhaps they may be given other opportunities elsewhere. As a believer in the infinite mercy of God I dare to trust that this will be so.

I desire to urge, however, upon any who care to listen these three things which I myself have learned in the course of years. First, the enormous importance of all this matter. Secondly, the folly of sin. Thirdly, since it needs must be that offences will come, the urgent need of repentance before in some other life or lives we are called upon to reap the harvest of that unrepented folly.

What is life as we know it, even if that life be not a single volume but a series of chapters which will ultimately be bound into a completed book ? A few breaths melting into the immensity of this bitter air, a few dewdrops sparkling on a single thorn in the great dim forest—no more. And what is Eternity ? Ah ! I cannot answer. Yet I do believe that our fate in the second depends not so much upon our doings perhaps, as on our struggles in the first. Surely, then, it behoves us to be up and stirring while there is still time. For if we neglect the opportunity who knows, as age sweeps on to endless age, with what agonies of grief we may repent that which can no more be remedied, because as we have chosen so we must go ; as the tree falls so must it lie. Even in this world the might-have-been is a thing terrible to contemplate ; what, then, may it be in a world that will neither suffer us to die nor

die itself ? To be cast out to the murk while others serve in honour within the glowing gates ; to be told to chew the cud of our unbelief or to eat of the husks and drink of the sour wine of our desires till we loathe the taste and stench of them, while others—among them, perchance, our most adored—feed on the manna of the blest ; to endure the reproaches and the heaped-up hate of the companions of our woe ; to be separated from those we loved and who loved us, those who have chosen the better part—oh ! surely we need fly to no obscene phantasies of mediaeval torture to paint the picture of a blacker hell. Even if mercy finds us at the last, as for my part I think it must and will, what sufferings must we first endure !—for of this we may be certain, that if in such conditions we should cease to suffer, then we shall be lost and draw near to the Second Death whence we can scarcely hope to rise again. For the soul, as for the body, pain is a healthy symptom. When it passes we are apt to mortify and—cease.

Now, like a Scotch preacher, I go to my second head : the folly of sin whereof even here the heritage is of sackcloth and of ashes. Never was there a truer saying than that the Devil is the worst of paymasters. If we go against the rules of the game as they are laid down for us by the creed we serve in that part of the world in which we have been born, even when those rules seem not natural to us, we err, and what is more we injure others, which is surely the essence of sin. For, as I have said, the laws of Nature differ from the laws of God as these are revealed to us (and we must follow the higher Light)—a fact from which I am sometimes tempted to argue that Nature, ‘ red in tooth and claw,’ is not begotten of God alone. Surely the powers called Satan and Death have had a hand in

its makings. Thus Nature says to Everyman who is a man :

‘ See where She stands with longing arms and lips that murmur love. Hark to what She says who would be the mother of your child : “ Seek ! Seek for heaven hid in these dark eyes of mine and find all Earth’s desire. Drink ! Drink of the Mysteries from the cup of this rich heart of mine and learn what Life can be. Sleep ! Sleep and dream of naught but me on this kind breast of mine which shall breathe for you alone until the Night forgets her stars.” ’

‘ Touch not, taste not, handle not,’ answers the cold stern Law. ‘ Pass on, she is not thine.’

Often enough it is Nature that prevails and, having eaten of the apple that She, our Mother, gives us, we desire no other fruit. But always the end is the same : its sweetness turns to gravel in our mouth. Shame comes, sorrow comes ; come death and separations. And, greater than all of these, remorse rises in the after years and stands over us at night, since, when our eyes are no longer clouded with the mists of passion, we see and bewail our wickedness.

For sin has this quality. · Like some bare, black peak in a plain of flowers it dominates all our landscape. However far we wander never can we escape the sight of it. Our virtues, such as they may be, are dwarfed and lost in the dark shadows thrown up by our towering crime. True and honest love of wife and child, unceasing thought for others, vicarious sufferings on behalf of others, often sharp enough to sadden, whatever kind deeds and charities may lie within our power, the utter and heartfelt forgiveness of all who have wronged us, the struggles that we made as the snare closed round us, the memories of those keen temptations from which we *have* escaped—it will be noted

that these are ever of a sort to appeal to whatever sin doth so easily beset us—high friendships well deserved, fair fame well won, duty well done, such are the flowers upon the plain we travel. Yet we forget them, we do not even note them, because of that black mount of evil which our stained hands piled and the icy gloom it throws. Never, never can we be free of it till prayer has brought unfeigned repentance, and these, hand in hand, have led us on to Faith, and Faith, opening her door, has shown us the far-off glory of Forgiveness, which glory, growing ever brighter, falls at length upon our heads in blessing and, when we turn our dazzled eyes to seek the familiar mount of shame—lo! it is gone.

The third head, that of the necessity of repentance, needs no elaboration. Of it I have already said enough. If we have forgotten our Creator in the days of our youth—or even of our age—let us at least obey the cry of His Messengers, and repent, repent while there is yet time. ‘The Promises are sure if only we will believe’ were the last words of my friend, the aged William Booth—very true words. And of these promises perhaps the greatest and the happiest for man is that of full and free forgiveness to those who kneel and from the heart will say, ‘Father, I have sinned. Father, forgive !’

But to do this we must have Faith. When Faith fails there is nought but blackness in which we wander helplessly and in vain. Even our Lord (as I venture to think, and I know one very learned bishop who agrees with me) as a man perhaps walked the world more by Faith than by knowledge. It may be that this was the heaviest of His temptations—the temptation to admit some creeping doubt of His own mission and Divinity. If so we can well understand the full

magnificence of His sacrifice and the glory of His triumph. Once, indeed, in the moment of agony and mortal weakness that Doubt seems to have conquered Him : I mean in the cry upon the Cross, ' My God ! My God ! Why hast Thou forsaken Me ? '

If this be so let us take comfort, since where He seems to have failed, how can we, His poor servants, always expect to succeed ? ' Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief ! ' Such should be our daily petition, which will not go unheeded.

The shores of India draw near, and I have finished the sermon which something has prompted me to write, whereof I will say that, however much it may be mocked at, I hope at least it can do no harm in the after years. It is the only one I ever composed or shall compose, and brief, bare as it is, it has taken me half a lifetime to think out its underlying principles. (How do clergymen succeed in evolving one or two on every Sunday of their active lives, I wonder !)

What is the sum of it all ? This. That my spiritual experience leads me to take a higher view of man than that which declares him to be but a physical accident. That, through all the winds and weeping of this rough world, I hear the whisper of the still, small voice of God directing us from on high. That, by the gift of His Christ (and mayhap in many another way), He has provided a means of Redemption for every soul that breathes in flesh. That, however often they may fail or stumble, He will love and save those who try to love and obey Him as they understand Him. That those who reject Him must themselves run a risk of rejection and of darkness, since, if we choose Death, Death will be given to us. Whatever good thing we desire we may have, but to have we must desire. That He will forgive all, whatever be their sins, who

strive to believe and yearn to be forgiven. That He, or His Messengers, will comfort us in our dark, ultimate hour of mortal agony (may it prove short and sudden !) and awful death sleep, and be with us in the light of the last Awakening. That He will lead us to our lost ones, who are dearer to us than life, in the home He has prepared for us and those who wish to dwell there in our company and, from Eternity to Eternity, in some place where sin and Satan do not come, will wipe all tears from off our faces. That in due season He will gather to us those other dear ones whom we have loved upon the earth and who do not forget us although we have been borne away. That, if it pleases Him to touch us with His Fire on the lips and give us back our whitened spirits, filled with the fulness of individual life, at His unending tasks and service in other Worlds or Heavens we shall grow ever brighter and more glorious until, spheres and æons hence, after this earth where we have no abiding city has become to us but as a troubled dream, though we be still very far away, at length we approach to the Divinity of Christ's own perfect nature. That all Love is immortal. It is God's light permeating the universe, and therefore incapable of diminution or decay. That Christianity is true, although I do not understand and have no right as yet to expect to understand the origin of its mysteries or the reason of the necessity for its great Sacrifice. Its fruits upon earth alone suffice to show that it is true, since by the fruit it bears must every tree be judged. That the heart of Faith is Christ, and that to His Cross I cling.

Such are the conclusions—old conclusions, but none the worse for that, since each soul must find them for itself—reached during the lifetime of a storm-driven, wayward man with too much heart, perhaps, for

happiness here below ; who yet, he trusts, is not altogether bad. For if he be bad why, from his mother on, should so many of his companions in this winter pilgrimage have been moved to love him well—as he prays that, notwithstanding all his errors, God does also and will do for aye ! Amen.

## APPENDIX

[THE following speech was delivered to the Canadian Club, in the Russell House, Ottawa, in March 1905, when Sir Rider Haggard (at that time Mr. H. Rider Haggard) was in Canada as Commissioner appointed by the Colonial Office. His instructions were "to visit and report on the Labour Colonies established in the U.S.A. by the Salvation Army. After inspecting them he was to proceed to Ottawa and discuss the subject with Earl Grey, then Governor-General of Canada.

Sir Rider wished this speech to be inserted as an appendix to '*The Days of My Life*', as it gives the essence of his views on the subject of the settlement of the surplus town population of Great Britain on the unoccupied land of the Empire, a subject to which he devoted so much time and energy.

Commander Booth Tucker, of the Salvation Army, was with Sir Rider on this occasion, and also spoke. There was a record attendance of members of the Canadian Club, Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King (Prime Minister of the Dominion in June 1926) being in the Chair.—ED.]

I will begin by making a confession. The other day I had the honour of addressing the branch of your society in Toronto, and there, for one solid half-hour, did I inflict myself upon them. I began to wonder how much they would stand. Well, I sat down and thought they must bless me for doing so. The next day I saw some of the newspapers, including one which stated that your humble servant had made what they were pleased to call a very interesting but exceedingly brief address. I thought to myself : If this is called brief in Toronto, I wonder what is long. I took a few opinions on the point. I asked why they called a speech of that length

a brief one. My friend's answer was that it had to do with your parliamentary institutions. He told me that it was quite common in your House of Commons and in the provincial Houses of Commons throughout the country, for speeches to run from two to three hours, and therefore that is the standard and model of time by which addresses are judged.

Now, gentlemen, I say to you at once that, high as might be that honour and greatly as I should desire it in any other circumstances, I feel that I should never be competent to be a member of a House of Commons of which this is true. Gentlemen, your president has made some very kind allusions to me and to my rather—what shall I call it?—varied career. He has spoken, for instance, of Africa. Well, gentlemen, it is true I began my life as a public servant in Africa, and many wonderful things I saw there.

I was in at the beginning, so to speak, of all the history we are living through to-day. I was with Sir Theophilus Shepstone when we annexed the Transvaal; as your president says, I had the honour of hoisting the flag of England over it. Gentlemen, I lived, too, to see the flag pulled down and buried. And I tell you this—and you, as colonists as I was, will sympathise with me—it was the bitterest hour of my life. Never can any of you in this room realise the scene I witnessed upon the market-square of Newcastle when the news of the surrender after Majuba reached us. It was a strange scene, it was an awful scene. There was a mob of about 5,000 men, many of them loyal Boers, many Englishmen, soldiers even, who had broken from the ranks—and they marched up and down raving, yet weeping like children—and swearing that whatever they were they were no longer Englishmen.

That is what I went through in those days; and

I only mention it to tell you how I came to leave South Africa. For I agreed that it was no longer a place for an Englishman. Still, time goes on, the wheels swing full circle, things change. I remember that after that I wrote a book. It was a history. And in that book I went so far as to say—I remember it well, and there it stands in black and white to be read—that unless some change occurred, unless more wisdom, more patriotism and a different system altogether prevailed in African affairs, the result would be a war which would tax the entire resources of the British Empire. Gentlemen, have we not had the war? And at that time what did they say? They laughed at me, an unknown young man. And, years later, when the war was on, they dug up the book and printed these paragraphs and said, ‘Dear me, what a remarkable prophecy!’ Three men were right: Sir Bartle Frere was right, and they disgraced him; my old chief, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, was right, and they disgraced him; and even I, humble as I was, was right, and they mocked at me. We know the end.

Thus my residential and official connection with South Africa came to an end—I would not stop there any longer. I came home and went to the bar, where I had fair prospects. And then a sad thing happened to me—I wrote a successful book.

I do not know whether to be sorry or glad that I wrote it. Other things might not have happened; and, after all, as Job the Patriarch says: ‘Man knoweth not his own way.’ You go as destiny drives you. So it was, gentlemen, I took to fiction. Having begun, I had to go on. And, after all, there is something to be said for it. After all, it is not a bad thing to have given pleasure and amusement to many who are weary or sick, and, perhaps, some instruction also.

You might do worse than write a good novel. Not that I for a moment wish to state that all of mine are good.

Of course, the time comes to every writer, I suppose, when he has an inspiration and does something which he knows to be better than he ever did before. Perhaps he sees a little higher up into heaven, perhaps he sees a little lower down into—the other depths ; and he creates something and knows that that thing which he has created will live, and that it will even go glittering down the generations. He knows, perhaps, that he has cut his name fairly deep upon the iron leaves of the Book of Time, which are so hard to mark. Perhaps he knows that, and for a little while lie is content. Not for long—no artist, I think, is ever contented for long with what he has done. But he thinks : ‘At least, I have done something.’

Then, perhaps, he begins to understand—it comes into his mind—that that was not his real inspiration. Not in these gauds of the imagination, these sparkling things, these plays of fancy or of eloquence or wit, was the real inspiration to be found. He turns and wonders where it is. And he turns, let us say, and looks at the dull masses of misery that pervade the globe, he looks and wonders, and he thinks : Is there nothing that I, humble as I am, can do to help to alleviate that misery, to lift up those who are fallen, to lift them up for their own good and for the good of the world ? And then, gentlemen, he knows that that, not the gaudy, exciting work is the real inspiration of his life.

And, perhaps, he turns and tries to match his own single strength against the prejudices of generations, and tries to get men to think as he does, tries to show them where the evil lies and where, too, lies the remedy. Gentlemen, I have spoken, as it were, in allegory. And yet these things have some application, certainly in my

humble case they have some application. Years ago, I saw what I described to you ; I saw the evils with which, since then, I have attempted to cope. I recognised that it was my duty to cope with them if I could.

It is a hard task, gentlemen. It is a hard thing, in the first place, to live down the reputation of being a writer of fiction—to surmount the enormous barrier of prejudice that lies across one's path. And it is not for years, perhaps, that people will begin to listen and will begin to understand that to most men's minds there are two sides. Still, humbly, imperfectly, I did attempt it. I have not done much. Yet I have done something. They listen to me now a bit. If they had not listened to me I should not be here in my present position to-day as a Commissioner from the Government of Great Britain.

Well, what is it ; what is this problem that moved me ? I will tell you in a few words. I perceived and realised the enormous change that is coming over the Western world ; how those, who, for countless generations, dwelt upon the land, are deserting the land and crowding into the cities. I studied the reasons for this. For two years I studied them, going through England, village by village, county by county, town by town. And I found out what they were. In England the chief cause was lack of prospect on the land. We are cramped in England with the remains of a feudal system which works nothing but ill ; and under that system it is so that no man on the land seems to have a chance to rise. The labourer on the land, say at two-and-twenty, is earning as high a wage as he can ever hope to earn.

I ask you, gentlemen, how should any of us like to know that at two-and-twenty we were doing the best

we could hope to do in life ? That is the lot of the labourer on the land. All that he has to look forward to at the end of his long career of forty or fifty years of toil is probably a place in the workhouse. Is that an attractive prospect ? Then, no doubt, the spread of education, the facilities of travel, and other things of that kind conduce to the immigration into the cities, and this movement goes on with ever-increasing rapidity.

At the present moment in England, I believe we have but one-seventh of our population living on the land. In the United States, if the figures given me are correct, matters are very little better. And so it is in other countries—everywhere the land dwellers heap themselves into the cities. And what happens to them when they get there ? How many succeed ? Not one in five, I say. The rest of them, for the most part, get nothing. If sickness strikes a man, when he arises from his bed his place is gone. His children grow ill through crowding together in narrow courts and unsanitary rooms, and become decimated by disease. Bad times come and the workmen are dismissed by the thousand from their employ. Grey hairs, at any rate, come at last, and with grey hairs the notice to quit ; and so they go down, and they go under and become part of that mass which is known as the submerged tenth—though I imagine there is a good deal more than a tenth. And there they are—miseries to themselves, useless to their country, and a burden upon the town that has to support them.

Gentlemen, if you think I exaggerate, ask Commander Booth Tucker, and he will tell you. He will tell you, he who knows, as one of the heads of the great organisation that is to day dealing with this class of people. He will tell you how many children they have

to feed in the morning in the big cities in order that they may go to school, how many dock labourers they have to feed, and so on. He can tell you tales you will scarcely believe of the suffering—the horrible suffering, the inconceivable misery of these great cities which the foolish peoples of the earth rush into to dwell there.

Now, that is what is going on in the great city. Let us look at the other side of the question. Let us go to places like Fort Amity, where I saw the Colony of the Salvation Army. As your president told you, I am not at liberty to forestall my report in any way ; but I can say this—that there I went to the schools, as I did in other places, and saw the children. The parents of these Fort Amity children were taken from a great city, the city of Chicago, where mostly they were working as day labourers. They came with nothing ; in fact, it was necessary to pay the fares of most of them. They had no prospects, nothing earned, nothing to hope for. If we could get at the facts, no doubt we should find they lived in one or two rooms, and not too well. I went and looked at these children. My daughter photographed them in the schools at Fort Amity. Never did you see a healthier, happier, more robust, more promising set of children in your life. And I wondered how these children would have looked had not the Salvation Army had the idea of starting this Colony and had they been left to wander about in the streets of Chicago. And I wondered also, gentlemen, how many of these faces—these happy, contented faces—would have been wanting, but for the change made in the condition of these children.

But you may be political economists, some of you, and we all know that political economy is a hard doctrine. And you may say : Well, these people went to the cities of their own accord ; let them expiate their

fault in the city ; let them welter and let them perish there, dead beats, and the world is well rid of them. Well, I am going to submit, if you will allow me, another side of the argument for your consideration. If you do not want to do anything on the ground of humanitarianism to help the people, I submit to you, gentlemen, and I submit to everyone, that there is another ground on which the thing should be done ; and that is the ground of the welfare of the nation.

I will start out with an axiom. If the Western nations allow this sort of thing to go on, allow their population to crowd into the cities, then, I say, the career of the Western nations is going to be short. The city folk, those who remain, will never hold their own in the world—not only because of the weakened physique and changed character, but because of another and more final reason. Gentlemen, children are not bred in the cities. There will come a time when the children bred there are too few—it is coming now. And if the children are not bred, if there is not the supply of healthy children to carry on the nation, how can the nation stand ? With the people on the land it is different. Self-interest comes into play.

A large family is a valuable asset to the small-holder ; in the city it is nothing but a drawback. Let any one of you gentlemen think of himself with a home consisting of a single room in a tenement in New York or a back slum in London, and with six or eight children; and then think of the contrast with those six children upon the land and able to assist in your business of caring for the cattle or carrying on many of the other operations of the farm. We must look at facts. With dwellers on the land self-interest comes in ; on the land alone will the supply of children be available that is necessary to carrying on our white races. And if they

are not carried on in sufficient numbers what of it? Of course, you have all heard of what they call the yellow peril, and many people have laughed at it as a bogey. Is it a bogey? Does Russia, for instance, consider that Japan is a mere nightmare? I think not; I think Russia has very definite and distinct ideas as to the prowess of Japan to-day. Japan is a small nation. Forty years ago the Japanese dressed themselves up in scale armour, like lobsters, and fought with bows and arrows. And look at them to-day, knocking Russia around the ring.

Imagine the state of affairs when, not little Japan, but, let us say, great China, with her 400,000,000 people, has also made some strides towards civilisation, has carried out, for instance, that programme which I saw announced in the papers yesterday, in the way of building warships; and imagine these 400,000,000 of stolid, strong, patient, untiring land-bred men having nowhere to live, having not earth upon which to stand, and seeking a home. And imagine them casting their eyes around for worlds to conquer, and seeing an island continent half vacant and other places with a few families scattered over the land, and a few millions heaped together in the things these white people call cities.

Imagine them saying, God—whatever gods there be, whatever gods we worship—give us the right to live; we have the right to our share of the earth; here we have not enough of the earth; we will seek the earth; we will take the earth; we will keep the earth. Then imagine the scanty peoples spread thinly over these territories saying: ‘But we will pass a law to keep you out.’ They answer: ‘We will come in nevertheless, we will walk through your paper law.’ And those who hold the ground say: ‘You shall not

come in ; we will shoot you ; we will keep you out with force of arms.' And their answer is : ' Keep us out if you can ; we have arms as well as you ; we are better men than you ; we will come ; we will occupy ; we will take ; we will keep.' Is that a bogey—a mere dream of the night ?

I tell you it is nothing of the sort. It is the thing which will happen within one hundred years unless there are very different arrangements made amongst the Western nations from those which exist to-day ; unless the people are moved from the cities back to the land. Population, gentlemen, is like water : where there is a hollow, thither it will flow to fill it. Therefore, it is vital to the nations that they should look into this matter and try to deal with it. I am as sure as that I stand before you that these words are true ; that I get at the truth, the essence, the fibre, the marrow of the thing, and that truth, that essence, that fibre, that marrow, is that you must get your people on to the land out of the cities, and keep them on the land there to multiply as God commanded them of old.

Now, gentlemen, how does this apply to the great country in which I am to-day ? I say that it applies very closely. I say that very soon there is going to be an enormous competition for immigration, for population, and especially for Anglo-Saxon population ; that the time is coming when these people will be bid for, when they will be sought for, when they will be paid for—paid any price to get them. And I venture to say to you : Get them while you can, get them from home, get them from England.

Now, gentlemen, if I live, within a month or two I hope to be able to show you a plan I have devised and which I hope, which I even dare to think, may show you how you can get a good many of these people.

I will say no more of that now, except that I trust you will agree with me when you read it, and that you will let no obstacle stand in your way, but will all put your shoulders to the wheel and for the sake of your country, and for the sake of all concerned, will try to help to bring into your splendid land Englishmen who will be made available to you, I hope, in many thousands.

I am beginning to be like one of your members of parliament, I fear I am catching the disease. I will only add this : That all the world is mad on trade, all the civilised world, at least, has got the idea that wealth is everything. I controvert that statement ; I say that wealth is nothing. What is wealth without men and women to use it and spend it ? I remember once writing a story in which I represented certain men shut up in a cave and surrounded by all the diamonds and all the gold of a continent. And they were starving. I would like to ask you of what use were those diamonds and that gold to them ?

In the same way, of what use is wealth unless you have men and women—healthy men and women—these are the real wealth of the nation. You remember the old Greek fable of Antæus, how, whenever he fell to earth he arose refreshed and strong. So it is with us. Do not believe, gentlemen, that wealth is everything. Wealth, I maintain, is nothing compared to flesh and blood, nothing as compared to healthy children ; nor is pomp nor any other thing—these are nothing. The strength of a people, gentlemen, is not to be found in their Wall Streets, it is to be found in the farms and fields and villages. I will only add just this one word—that I do hope that what I have so humbly, so inadequately tried to say before you may perhaps go deep into the minds of some of you and set you thinking. For myself, I can only say that I have tried to

carry out this task—not the task of speaking, but the bigger one—with a single heart, because I believe in its necessity, because I believe that no man can serve his generation better than by trying to point out these things and try to make the people think. If I have done that, gentlemen, I have not lived in vain. All that I should ask to be said of me when I am gone is this : ‘ He did his best.’

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